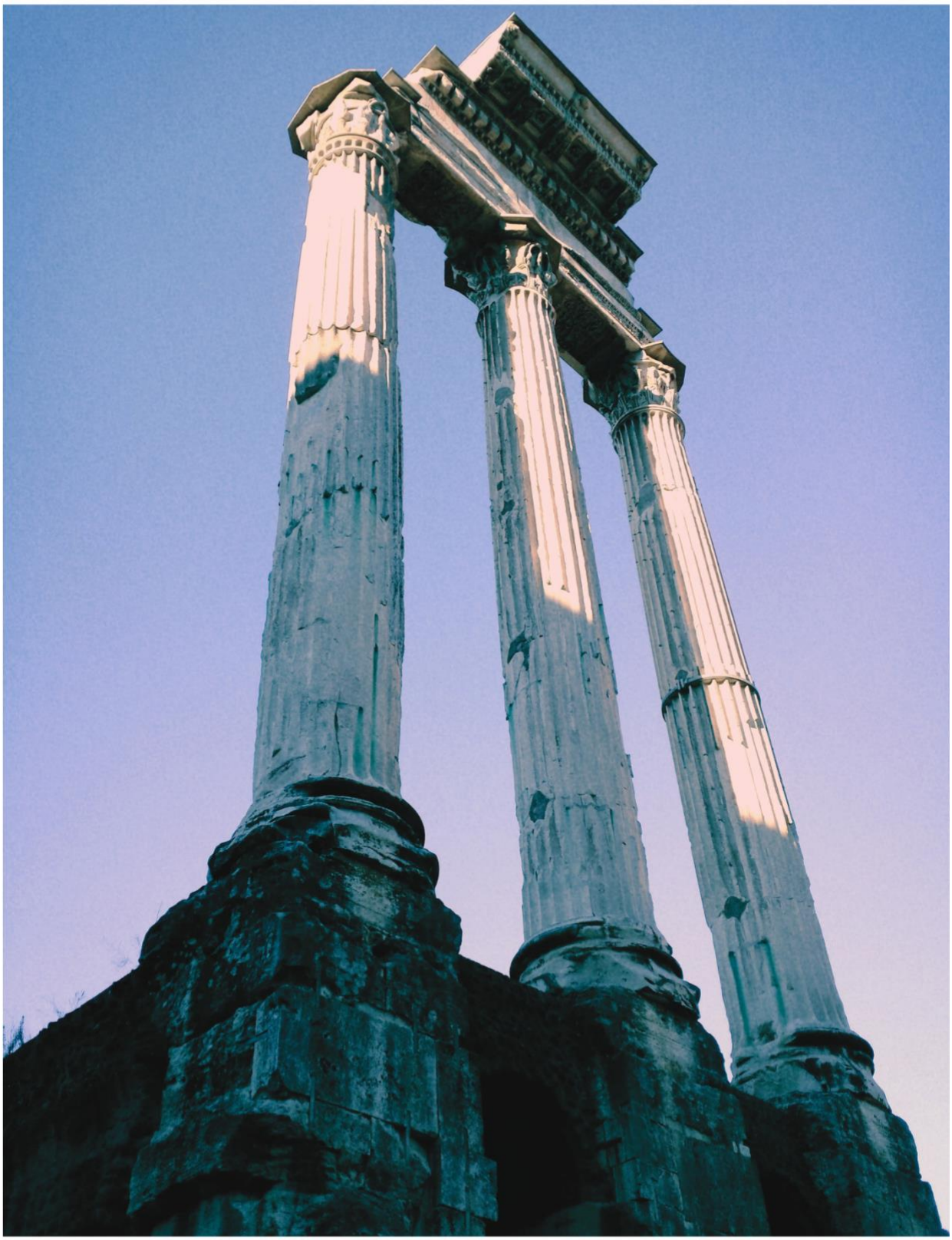
PROPOSITIONS



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Propositions

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Synopsis

This philosophical treatise, titled "Propositions," is the culminating product of years of intensive philosophical reflection. In this work, a continuous thread is woven from metaphysical domains to the frontiers of epistemology, philosophy of mind, ethics, and finally, politics. Utilizing logical resources, academic research, and drawing inspiration from renowned philosophers like Wittgenstein and Aristotle, the aim is to erect a theoretical framework to understand and explain essential phenomena of human nature and existence itself. Among these, the elusive subjective consciousness and the ideal ethical behavior for human beings stand out.

Throughout the pages of this writing, the following questions will be meticulously explored: What are the primary characteristics of existence, and what implications do they have for our world? How do the limits of reality condition the nature of God, ethics, and freedom? If God exists, what would be His true essence? What does meaning truly refer to, and what is its real foundation? What is the true nature of consciousness, and how can subjective experience be explained? What truly defines ethical conduct, and what is the most relevant criterion for our lives? How does this criterion integrate into the interpersonal and social conflicts that trouble us? What role does the State play based on this criterion?

In a rigorous and enlightening exercise, these pages will unravel the ontological, epistemological, and ethical complexities that shape our existence. With the conviction that philosophical inquiry provides us with the necessary tools to understand the essence of reality and our place in it, "Propositions" becomes an indispensable work for those restless in their quest to understand the great dilemmas of existence.

This work does not present an easy read but rather demands rigorous commitment and a willingness to delve into the complexity of philosophical thought. Therefore, readers are warned that this book requires analytical work and advanced reading. For those who feel challenged by philosophical thought and are willing to immerse themselves in an academic and analytical discourse, this work represents a unique opportunity to expand intellectual horizons and confront the inherent complexities of human nature and existence itself. It is a technical intellectual journey, nourished by the thoughts of great masters and guided by conceptual clarity and argumentative rigor.

Thus, the bold and committed reader is invited to delve into the depths of this work, where we will address transcendental truths and where doors to new perspectives on the world and our place in it will be opened.

Preface

In this treatise, four central theses are presented that challenge many of the prevailing conceptions in contemporary philosophy. Each sheds light on crucial aspects of human existence and is grounded in a rigorous analysis that transcends the conventional boundaries of thought.

The first thesis dismantles the entrenched notion that the existence of a God implies an ultimate meaning. Through a meticulous exploration of the limits and characteristics of existence, it concludes that the absence of ultimate meaning is independent of divine presence. This perspective challenges theological foundations and presents a deeper view of the relationship between existence and ultimate meaning.

In the second thesis, the traditional conception of meaning as developed in the postulates of analytical philosophy is questioned. It argues that meaning transcends mere conceptual reference and that, in fact, we can speak objectively about realms such as ethics and aesthetics. This vision expands the scope of philosophical reflection and proposes a new conceptual framework for addressing fundamental questions of human experience.

The third thesis delves into the dimension of the mental and the subjective, exploring the phenomenon of "qualia" and their relationship with matter and energy. It constructs a theoretical framework to understand the problem of subjective experience and argues that these aspects of consciousness are rooted in the specific identity of the individual. It addresses the challenge of understanding the unity and uniqueness of this subjective identity. Unlike traditional identity theories, it proposes a notion of "sense of identity" that transcends the mere equation between brain activity and subjective experience, deepening the resolution of what I call the problem of unity and singularity in our existence (or the unitary problem), while offering a tentative explanation of the Hard Problem of Consciousness.

In the fourth thesis, a forceful critique is undertaken of various ethical approaches, from utilitarianism to deontological, emotivist, and social ethics. It argues that these ethical approaches are deficient and lack solid justification. Instead, it proposes that ideal ethical conduct and ethical foundations are based on an objective and hierarchical state of reward of the subject. This innovative ethical perspective stands as a more efficient

and optimal criterion for guiding our actions and challenges traditional conceptions in the field of ethics.

Limited use of references has been made in this work, where most of the ideas presented emerge from deep reflection and are supported by various general knowledge. It is acknowledged that other philosophers have tangentially addressed some of these issues, but it is argued that this work makes significant progress by establishing new contributions and unveiling the ultimate implications of the examined postulates.

In summary, this philosophical treatise represents a bold invitation to transcend the traditional confines of thought.

Note to the present Edition

Since this book was first published in 2017, I have advanced and rethought certain aspects related to consciousness, God, and free will—topics discussed in this book. These revisions are developed in my latest work, titled “This Is It - An Inner Exploration Towards Mastery and Well-Being,” where I also expand on some of the concepts related to well-being, happiness, and ethics that are presented in this work.

These revisions and deep dives are intended to support certain changes in some of my positions regarding the transcendent, the possible and effective existence of an ineffable meaning in the universe, the actual existence of a creator intelligence, and the possibility of a more radical free will than what is proposed in this book. This free will is associated with a consciousness that is irreducible to matter, where qualia provide an adaptive advantage to living beings.

Table of contents

Part One: Introduction and Initial Definitions - 7

Part Two: Developments in Epistemology. On Meaning; the Functioning Based on Associations and the Activity They Imply; on the Nature of Consciousness-Quale; on Determinism; Some Aspects of Reward - 48

Part Three: Developments on Determinism; on Freedom - 199

Part Four: Developments on Meaning; on Ethics; on Elevated States of Reward - 215

Part Five: Developments on God; on Meaning; on Our Intuition - 346

References - 389

Part One

Within the framework of our concepts, ideas, and propositions, the notion of reality is inherently embedded in all other notions and concepts. Therefore, it would be illogical to claim, for instance, that "reality has a cause," because the notion of cause presupposes, first and foremost, the notion of reality; causes exist within the realm of the real. In other words, if something has a cause, that cause cannot be nonexistent.

It is possible to assert that multiple universes exist and that the universe we live in is just one among many. In this context, we might argue that our universe had a cause. However, it would be irrational to maintain the same about reality as a whole, that is, referring to the entirety of universes.

A historical question related to this topic is: "Why does something exist instead of nothing?" When we talk about the collection of entities that make up what we call reality and pose this question, we can observe an important fact. When we ask "why" something exists, we are alluding to the existence of a cause and, consequently, assuming a reason for the existence of that something. The key to this issue lies in the fact that if we are asking for the reason for the existence of reality itself, we are inquiring about something that should exist before any kind of reality exists. This leads to a contradiction, as the cause of reality would have to be real, that is, it would have to exist. In summary, we would be presupposing the existence of reality before questioning its existence, which is incoherent.

Thus, we could conclude that reality simply "is" and is not subject to a cause. This differs from the idea that our universe originated at a specific moment. It is possible that multiple universes exist, and that ours, like the others, has an origin based on certain reasons or causes. However, there must be something prior, something that simply "is," without the need for causes, and it is this something that provides the causes for other entities.

On the other hand, we commonly express the existence or nonexistence of something, and in this context, the terms "something" and "exists" refer to different dimensions. When we refer to "something," we are alluding to the associations of the subject, to the mental realm of an individual. In contrast, when we state that something "exists," we are referring to a set of entities that are outside the mental realm of the

subject. By saying that something exists, we are indicating that mental associations relate to entities external to the mental realm of the individual.

However, it is important to note that sometimes we may refer to elements of the mental when asserting that something exists, within a restricted mental realm. For example, we can assert that there is a feeling of joy, which means that there is a mental entity in a particular subject or in several subjects, or that subjects can experience this feeling. Generally, when we talk about what exists, we refer to things that are perceived at some level. By stating that something exists, we are indicating that it is real, that it is the case, which implies that this something is perceived or inferred from other perceptions.

However, it is sometimes proposed that certain things exist, meaning they can represent what would be perceived as other things, but for various reasons, they cannot be observed. In these cases, claiming that something exists but cannot be recognized in any sense or inferred from anything would be a grave error, and a fundamental question arises: what value does it have for us?

When we express something like "there is a reality" or "reality exists," we do so in the same previous context, using "exists" or "there is" to indicate that this reality we conceive of relates to entities external to us. On the other hand, saying something like "there is nothing" or "nothing exists" would be equally absurd, as the notion of existence associated with the term "there is" leads us back to the notion of reality. In other words, we are referring to the same thing, and we cannot assert that something exists which, in reality, does not exist. If we focus on the concepts related to the terms "there is" and "nothing," we arrive at the conclusion that we are facing a contradiction, but we understand what we mean by "there is nothing" due to our association with the idea of "something" in the context of everyday life.

We can approach existence as equivalent to reality, meaning that reality is synonymous with existence. The understanding of the notion of existence or reality and what it refers to is based on the association of the term (which implies a perceptual aspect, whether visual, auditory, or another) with other subjective perceptual aspects. The basis of this understanding lies in the association with subjective sensory manifestations, and this association is fundamental to our grasp of the notion of reality and its implications.

We understand what constitutes reality based on everything that is perceived by our senses, whether directly or through instruments that measure what we cannot perceive directly. When we say "this is real," we are referring to a set of everything we perceive. Essentially, our understanding of the notion of existence, of what exists, of the real, and ultimately of reality, is derived from our perceptions ("what exists is what I am perceiving" could be an affirmation).

Existence or reality, in the sense of what we commonly call the world, refers to a set of specific entities (those things we claim to perceive, for example) and involves a spatial-temporal structure. When we talk about what is not real, what does not exist, we are referring to the fact that something mentioned or associated by someone does not refer to entities that are part of reality independent of the person. Alternatively, in the mental realm, we indicate that a certain mental content being discussed is not present at that moment, for example. We talk about mental entities that are part of what exists, what we call reality, but are restricted to the domain of subjects and do not transcend beyond them.

What does not exist, the non-real, cannot be perceived in any way. In everyday life, when we say there is no cup on a table, we mean that we have not perceived that particular instance. However, in a deeper sense of non-existence, we assert that it cannot be perceived under any circumstances because it does not pertain to a relationship of entities at that moment that are part of the world.

It is important to note that what does not exist, the non-real, can also refer to the illogical, that is, to what is not possible, like a triangle with five sides. We can only know what exists; the notion of non-existence implies that there is no possible perception of something thought or said, at least in the world we live in, or that a notion contradicts itself logically. However, we cannot directly prove the non-existence of something, because we would need the notion of existence, as "something" implies reality and existence, and thus poses the nonexistent. We cannot directly demonstrate the non-existence of something. The only possibility would be an indirect form of proof, if it can be called that, which would consist of demonstrating the existence of something we consider would exist and whose existence contradicts another fact, so if A is true, then B cannot be possible.

To explain that a statement that assumes a relationship between elements in the realm of external reality is not valid essentially means pointing out that it is not possible

to have a perception of that relationship in the context of the external world outside the mental sphere. Moreover, it implies asserting that such a relationship is inaccessible to perception. By stating that a claim associating elements in external reality is not valid, we are essentially asserting that this association has no existence in the real world or that it is subject to a contradiction that makes it unobservable in terms of entities outside the mental realm. Using the notion of a relationship between elements outside the mental sphere, we refer to the process by which we determine the existence or non-existence of something, implying that such a thing is related to entities that exist beyond the mental sphere, but that, in some way, it is our mental understanding that deals with it.

It is important to highlight that, although the distinction between the mental and the cerebral will be addressed later, it is relevant to note that not only the mental can refer to entities that belong to the realm of reality external to the mental. Since the mental and the cerebral are not identical, certain cerebral activities can refer to entities that are part of what we call reality. However, at this point, we would not be talking about something outside the mental, but rather something outside the cerebral realm.

When we affirm certain propositions, when we assert the existence or truth of something, we are always immersed in the realm of the mental (or, if applicable, the cerebral, as will be addressed in the second part of this work). In other words, what we say exists is part of our thought, conception, and imagination; and when we affirm that it exists outside of us, we are relating it to what we perceive in our minds, beyond the mental sphere.

From my perspective, the true refers to what constitutes part of what we call reality. The true is identified with the real, while the logical is linked to the possible. I hold this view because one of the criteria we can use is that what constitutes reality gives meaning to logic; what is logical is what can manifest as feasible in the realm of reality. If we discover that something we believed to be impossible can occur or exist, we must reevaluate what we consider logical. Something may be possible in theory, but that does not guarantee its manifestation at a specific moment or at any time. However, this does not mean that the logical is detached from reality, since the possible refers to the entities that make up what we know as reality. In contrast, the illogical relates to what is impossible, and what is not possible does not manifest in reality. In other words, to assert that something is illogical is to assert that it does not exist.

However, this relationship is not so direct in the case of "the logical." Although "illogical" is the opposite of "logical," the logical can be conceived but does not necessarily come to exist or happen in reality. On the other hand, the illogical simply does not occur. This raises an interesting consideration about how, in the realm of concepts, negations and associations are not always symmetrical. In this context, the opposite is contradictory and illogical, as previously addressed. This could be understood as a characteristic of some concepts.

To illustrate this, consider the case of "the logical" and "the illogical." We can contemplate the following scheme: possible and not possible as equivalent to happens and does not happen. If we applied a symmetrical negation and said "not-not happens," negating the second aspect, we would essentially be saying "happens," which contradicts the underlying notion that we are referring to the possible if one thing directly references the other. It would then be the same as the possible, which is problematic, since what is possible may or may not occur. By negating "does not happen" and concluding that something can occur (because it is possible), we would be incurring a contradiction, which would be illogical.

A practical example can illustrate this point. When we say "It is not possible for me to arrive at the work meeting at 10," we are not asserting that it is logically impossible for meetings to be held at 10. Instead, we are expressing that we cannot do it in our particular circumstance, but that does not rule out that it is possible in the general context of reality. That is, it is not possible for our specific situation, but it is logical in general terms, as it is feasible in terms of the entities that make up reality.

When I assert that an association between elements is true or not, I am essentially evaluating whether this association implies a relationship between elements in reality. This occurs when such an implication is explicitly suggested in the association of elements or when it is somehow assumed that we are considering relationships between elements, even if we do not explicitly mention them. In this context, uttering something like "hot dogs" and questioning its truthfulness makes no sense, as this expression does not suggest a relationship of elements in reality. There may have been a relationship at some point, and that is why we have this association, but this is different when we assert something like "hot dogs are salty," for example.

It is relevant to note that if we say "hot dogs" are real or ask if "hot dogs" are real, according to the criteria we've described, we encounter the same lack of coherence. The

issue lies in that "hot dogs" imply associations of elements, at least a minimum number of associations considered as components of more complex associations that do suggest a relationship between elements in reality. However, when we talk about "hot dogs" as units or elements in themselves, it may seem that we are not referring to an association of elements. Therefore, it becomes necessary to make this clarification.

"Hot dogs" indeed imply a relationship with reality in the sense that they represent something real. However, the situation changes when we ask if "hot dogs" are true because using the term "true" explores the connection between an association and a relationship of elements in reality. This connection is not suggested in the association "hot dogs." However, the situation is different if we ask, "Are hot dogs real?" In this case, we are indeed implying this connection with reality.

Sometimes, when I mention that something lacks sense, I am not referring to its meaning itself, but rather pointing out the presence of an inconsistency in relation to certain statements and criteria we are using.

Truth is equated with reality, existence, and what is logically coherent in terms of the real. However, it is important to highlight that truth implies the possibility of something being so. The assertion of an entity "N" is proven when "N" exists. Nonetheless, it is crucial to understand that no proposition can cease to exist, as the very proposition, what has been expressed, exists in the mind of the subject who formulates it. However, the content of the proposition may refer to something in external reality, such as an association of elements related to a physical object, for example, which may not correspond to external reality.

The evidence of something "N," considered equivalent to the existence of "N," implies that "N" indeed exists. When a statement "N" exists at a moment "t0" and the same statement "N" is valid for a later moment "t1," the truth of "N"—that is, the existence of "N"—does not solely depend on the statement "N" itself but also on the variable "t" (time). In other words, "N" is subject to concrete manifestations of events, influenced by structural causes, expressed through a temporal dimension (changes of state) associated with different time terms (such as "t0" and "t1") representing discrete moments. Each of these moments reflects a particular state, and consequently, the structural cause of "N" may refer to a different association of elements for "t0" and "t1," which in turn represents two distinct discrete states of matter.

It is crucial to understand that the assertion of "N" does not necessarily imply that "N" exists, as the content of the statement may be true or false in terms of the existence of "N." Not all statements "N" are demonstrable. For example, this applies to axioms or statements that do not relate to concrete facts of reality. A system of statements does not automatically translate into a set of truths. In a system, some axioms may be indeterminable, meaning they cannot be proven. However, this does not necessarily imply they must be proven. Within the context of such a system, many statements can be considered absolute truths, that is, demonstrable within the system, which ultimately ensures the existence of "N" as part of what exists.

Considering the scenario in which a particular entity has an initial cause denoted as "i," there is the possibility that this cause "i" in turn has a secondary cause, which we can label as "ii." It is important to note that this possibility of secondary causes, represented by "ii," can repeat indefinitely. We can extend this recursive process infinitely. However, we must consider the following assertions.

When a phenomenon "A" has a cause "B," we can state that the phenomenon is being caused. If "B" implies "A," meaning that when the existence of "B" is a fact, then the existence of "A" is also a fact. If our condition requires "B" to exist without exception, otherwise "A" cannot be a fact, the same applies to the causes of "B." If "B" has a cause "C," then "C" must exist for "B" to exist. Given that "B" has a cause "C," it is plausible, though not obligatory, to consider that "C" may have a cause "D." We can apply this cause-and-effect logic to each level of causality. If this sequence holds, then "cause(n)" is a fact, where "n" includes infinity (∞), implying that "cause(n)" can comprise an infinite number of causes.

However, it is not feasible for "cause(n)" to be the case for an entity, where "n" includes infinity (∞). In this scenario, the fact that the entity "X" exists would depend on a cause "Xk" which, ultimately, does not exist because there would always be a cause behind each cause. Consequently, it would not be possible to find a cause "Xk" that sustains the effect, as there would be an infinite chain of causes. Ultimately, an entity "X" exists due to a sum of determined and finite causes, not an infinite number of causes. When "Xa" manifests as the primary cause, then the entity "X" exists. Therefore, "X" depends on a single cause or a finite sum of causes, not a constant infinite sum of causes.

The concept of "cause(n)" being the case for an entity, where "n" includes infinity (∞), is not a feasible possibility. In such a scenario, the entity "X" simply would not exist. In reality, an entity "X," which is part of what we know as reality and is subject to various causes, ultimately has a cause that is not caused by another entity. This also applies to the cause that originated reality as a whole, that is, the set of entities that make up reality, the world that gives meaning to these terms. The ultimate cause of why all this exists also lacks a cause. While it may seem implausible that something does not have a cause, it is logical and, in fact, necessary, as we have outlined in the previous sequence, that certain things do not have a cause; otherwise, the entity "X" could not exist. This notion is not only logical and possible but fundamental in terms of reality. An entity can lack a cause or have causes, and the ultimate cause of everything is not caused by another entity.

When we assert that reality is equivalent to existence, we are essentially stating that we equate both concepts. Our understanding of what reality or existence means, in our context, is based on our association of the word "reality" with things we observe and verify as existing; that is, those that are verifiably the case due to our initial perception. In other words, our understanding of the terms "reality" or "existence" is grounded in our own nature; if we perceived nothing, we could not discern or account for existence or reality. This sense of reality or existence, in terms of the terms themselves, equates to reality itself, that is, the set of entities we perceive, identify, or even those we think exist, although we cannot concretely identify them, as they refer to entities, like those we perceive, even if they are different (since they are not identifiable). This latter aspect is encompassed in what some describe as "what exists." Ultimately, all these associations contribute to our understanding of existence or reality.

When I mention the concept of cause earlier, I refer to the underlying reason why something exists, that is, the necessity of its existence. The existence of a particular cause constitutes the a priori condition for something to exist. Thus, when we refer to existence itself, it cannot have a cause, because existence in itself represents the condition from which the cause of anything is established. Everything outside of what already exists simply does not exist; therefore, a cause of existence or reality beyond this cannot exist or be conceivable. Existence represents a boundary in this sense. This translates to the idea that, ultimately, we arrive at a fundamental and primordial structure of reality, where there is no cause, and if it did not have existence, it would not

be possible. Consequently, the primary causal object must exist without needing a cause, as reality, at its most fundamental level, manifests in a given form without needing a cause, as it reaches a limit, implying that objects acquire their form based on this primordial structure.

When I refer to this primordial form, I am not suggesting it is of a unique nature, as it is possible that multiple ultimate, uncaused forms exist, different from each other, operating at a primordial level.

In this way, "Xa" represents existence and its form at its most fundamental level, that is, reality and its form. When we refer to the cause of a specific state or fact, considering things that are part of reality, we must take into account the previous propositions about causes. However, "Xa" represents existence in its primordial structure, its form, and its limit, which rules out the possibility of infinite causes. Although there is no logical necessity for an atomic fact to necessarily derive from another, as Wittgenstein suggested in his "Tractatus" (see reference 1 in the "References" section at the end of this work for more information on this aspect), we must consider that for a fact to be and exist, there must be an intrinsic reason that explains its configuration. This reason goes back to the form of reality, as existence is a fundamental condition, and its form acts as the cause at the deepest level for facts to occur.

Thus, we can understand that in the case of a notion like God, even if we conceive it as an intelligent, omnipresent, and omniscient entity, to be considered as such, it must exist and cannot transcend this condition. However, the issue becomes more complex, as it relates to the form of existence, from where such a notion could arise, as long as we do not identify it with the form of existence itself. While it may be the reason for the existence of our universe at an initial level, it is not so ultimately. Ultimately, what determines reality is the form of existence, and if it is the form of existence, it cannot be conclusively defined.

Individuals have the ability to consider existence as a whole. The notion of a set of what exists is composed of the things that make up that set. These things are defined through meaningful signs. Often, the meaning of a thing is interpreted as its cause; however, the meaning of things, in general terms, refers to what the thing represents according to a certain criterion. What a thing represents is a manifestation of a part of the set of what exists or, at its most basic level, may simply point to the set of what

exists itself. In this context, the meaning of something is manifested through the signs of language and designates existence in its entirety or a part of what exists. When we define something, we are trying to establish its meaning in a general sense.

From a linguistic perspective, if we consider words abstractly, the definition of something might seem arbitrary. The arbitrariness lies in the fact that individuals use language signs to refer to things, not the other way around; that is, the thing does not determine its own sign. The sign is associated with the thing, but the thing does not determine its own sign, and the same sign can refer to different things. This is what I mean by "arbitrary." However, we must consider that the meaning of something, to some extent, depends on the definition provided for that something, as this definition is based on the minds of the subjects. Therefore, we must consider the relationships to which we refer with those signs in our definitions, and in that aspect, it is no longer arbitrary.

The central issue relates to representation through signs. When we say something like "X is good" or "X is beautiful," the goodness or beauty of X depends on the definition I establish regarding what constitutes goodness or beauty. X does not inherently possess qualities of goodness or beauty independent of the subject; rather, these qualities are associated and explained through the subject's associations and understanding. In other words, the criterion for determining whether X is good or beautiful resides in the mind of the subject and does not exist outside of it. If I were to establish that beauty refers exclusively to certain physical characteristics unrelated to emotional states in our brain, for example, I might conclude that object X is intrinsically beautiful. However, in this case, beauty would simply be a label for those physical characteristics. Under this criterion, that is, according to this definition of beauty, something would be considered beautiful in itself, since according to this criterion, beauty equates to those physical characteristics of the object. Nonetheless, it is crucial to understand that the notion of beauty could refer to something entirely different, in which case another criterion would apply. The criterion ultimately resides in the mind of the subject and does not exist as an independent entity outside of it.

I can assert that "X is good" because, from my perspective, "good" relates to what generates well-being. If X produces well-being, then I conclude that X is good. However, if I personally associated "good" with the capacity to grant freedom to a person, regardless of their well-being (although it is true that many people may consider

that freedom entails well-being), then the reason why X is considered "good" would change.

The beauty of X depends on the things I perceive and how I establish my notion of the "beautiful." Additionally, the perception of X's beauty depends on whether X possesses the characteristics I associate with what I consider "beautiful." However, "beauty," in the sense many people attribute to this term, is established through associations in my mind that go beyond the mere physical characteristics of objects. It requires the association of mental states that exist at the cerebral level, but not outside of it. Moreover, the characteristics I associate with beauty can vary from person to person, meaning that the beauty of an object depends on the subject's criteria, established based on associations between what is perceived and various ideas, values, and mental states. In summary, "beauty" is subjective and depends on individual perception and criteria, and always resides in the mind, not outside of it.

Therefore, we understand or grasp the meaning of something through the associations we make with other things. However, I distinguish between meaning and understanding or comprehending something. Understanding a term often involves expanding the associations related to that term, but it is not the fundamental factor. This simply suggests that greater meaning is attributed to the term itself. Asking for the meaning of something is, in fact, asking for the associations that thing has with other things. This reflects my criterion. Ultimately, meaning is composed of associations, and these associations involve related elements.

When we talk about the sense of a proposition or term, it is important to remember that the term or proposition itself implies a sensory manifestation, such as a sound or an image. These sensory manifestations are associated with entities in a reality external to oneself and are connected through associations involving qualia (or associations at the cerebral level, as detailed in the second part of this work). In this context, sense refers to other similar manifestations, such as words or propositions, which are also sounds or images and are associated with the term or proposition. That is, both what is associated with the term and the term itself share a similar nature, as both are qualia.

It is possible to associate one word with another word, which gives meaning to the word according to my criterion of meaning. However, this does not necessarily imply a complete understanding of the term. The resulting understanding may be limited; one might not fully comprehend a term if they have few associations. On the other hand, in

some cases, such as with abstract terms like "justice," one might need more associations to consider that they fully understand it.

Understanding is not simply a quantitative matter related to the number of things associated with a term. Rather, it involves having specific associations of things related to the term, which allows us to determine if, in a given context, the associations established are appropriate. For example, if we remember that in a market the term is next to apples, we can say that we have understood the term well, especially if what is associated with it is the image of an apple. This is based on specific associations of things that allow us to validate if the term's associations are appropriate in a particular context, such as the market.

Following this line of thought, the things associated with a term, in the context of meaning, refer to qualia that manifest. When we trace the things associated with a term, we do not arrive at qualia activated by an external reality or internal states; instead, the qualia themselves are the terms we refer to. For example, when we have a word that implies a sound, that sound is a qualia, and the things associated with it are other qualia. We say that these qualia are activated due to an external reality or refer to internal states, but ultimately, the meaning is given by the qualia associated with a term. The existence of an external reality that activates these qualia is a conclusion based on the experience of the qualia.

The meaning of something refers to the associations we have in our minds regarding that something, that is, to the mental manifestations related to it. It does not necessarily imply the existence or non-existence in an external reality, as meaning is linked to the world of the mind itself. Verifiability relates to the association of something through the manifestations of other qualia. For example, when we talk about the color "red," this term relates to the subjective experience of the color, the qualia of that color, rather than the wavelength of light that is part of the external reality. Speaking of a "square circle" makes sense because there are things associated with this term, which involve distinctive qualia, even though in the external reality there is no square that is a circle.

According to the established criteria, comprehension doesn't just refer to the number of associations something has. Among the things associated with a term that give it meaning are manifestations of a person's internal states, such as emotions, which don't exist outside the individual. A term by itself, without any associations, would be

considered meaningless. The associated things, the subjective mental manifestations, are the key elements, and for meaning to exist, there must be associations among them. Meaning pertains to the association of things.

When we say something is not understood or lacks meaning, we're indicating that it has few associations. A term implies a subjective and mental manifestation related to perception, whether through sounds or images. If this manifestation doesn't activate other perceptive manifestations, if it isn't associated with other things, then a deep understanding of the term cannot be achieved. On the other hand, if the term is associated with other things, a deeper understanding can be reached. Comprehension is a qualitative matter and depends on how many mental manifestations can be activated from another, but the quality of comprehension is key. Quantity relates to meaning, which can be greater or lesser depending on the degree of associations. Thus, a term referring to an object is understood through the association of the term with that object since the term alone is limited to certain perceptive manifestations.

The meaning of something is related to the factors associated with it, and these factors are also subjective mental manifestations, meaning subjective mental elements related to that something. The concept of comprehension involves expanding the associations of something through the connection with other previously learned concepts. This expansion leads from a simple linguistic code, for example, to the real-world objects that code is associated with. The property of meaning is guaranteed when the knowledge of something is associated in our brain, which is known as grasping the meaning of things. This refers to the associations of that something, and the fewer the associations, the more obscure or lesser the meaning is said to be. However, this can be confused with the notion of comprehension, according to my criteria.

Meaning requires associations between elements, as isolated things are merely subjective mental manifestations. Meaning represents the things associated with something, according to my criteria. When we ask about the meaning of something, we are inquiring about the things associated with that something, which refers to an association of things. What we call meaning refers to the things associated with a term, and this also involves an association of things. According to my criteria, the things associated with something represent what we commonly call the meaning of something, although one could establish a different criterion for what meaning is.

The meaning of something can increase as the things associated with it increase. Underlying the concept of meaning is the ability to establish certain associations of things. Individuals have the capacity to grasp the meaning of things, so their functioning at some level must be based on some type of association.

To understand how the meaning of something arises or originates, I propose adopting an associative stance on mental-cerebral functioning. This stance could be described as global, in the sense that it is not strictly limited to associations as the only mechanism governing mental processes. This is because we cannot ignore the factors that influence and shape associations, such as brain biochemistry, neuronal structure, and other relevant aspects.

Throughout history, we have encountered similar notions explaining how we build concepts from simpler impressions. However, my intention is to extend this associative notion to all aspects of our mental functioning, establishing a connection with brain functioning. In my opinion, this provides a more accurate approach to addressing phenomena such as meaning and knowledge, as well as epistemology in general.

I will address how meaning is a phenomenon rooted in the mental-cerebral plane and offer a critique of Wittgenstein's perspectives on this topic. The central idea is that meaning originates in the associations and connections between mental and neural elements, leading to a deeper understanding of how we perceive and make sense of the world around us.

Reality serves as the foundation of our thought. When we examine propositions, they refer to objects that are part of existence, meaning the totality of what exists. Propositions can also be expressions that designate existence as a whole, but their meaning derives from the associations between objects and ultimately depends on the subject rather than objective reality, at least at certain levels, as I mentioned earlier.

The meaning of something can be based on associations representing relationships that indeed occur in the world. Definitions imply associations that can actually exist, but definitions are constructs generated by the mind and do not refer to objective entities. Sometimes, we can agree on definitions in certain discussions, but it's also possible that we have different definitions for something we designate with the same term or proposition. However, no definition is objectively more true than another, since definitions do not exist in reality outside the subject, but only in the minds of

individuals. Defining involves stating that something is equal to something else, establishing an equivalence between the symbolic terms we use (the signs of language), which implies an association. Even so, reality does not necessarily imply association at an ultimate level between the sign (denoting a subjective mental manifestation, such as sounds or images) and the manifestation of another perception, which can involve an object in reality, relationships between things in reality, or even the internal mental states of the subject. Definition is ultimately a subjective construction that does not necessarily reflect reality but only the associations that exist in the mind of the subject.

What is true are the associations of things that represent effective and real relationships in reality. Existence can encompass everything, including propositions that refer to relationships between things that effectively exist. These relationships are part of reality; they are reality itself. However, the relationships between things referred to by propositions may not correspond to real objects and their relationships, that is, to those composed of matter, which we can often, though not always, perceive directly. Ultimately, propositions referring to relationships between things can be related to real objects or ideas, and their truth or falsehood will depend on their correspondence with objective reality.

Let's consider the following definition: "A person is any human being, regardless of their state of development." This definition establishes a relationship between the term "person" and two key elements: "human being" and "state of development," emphasizing the independence of this relationship. The issue here lies in the arbitrariness with which we assign the term "person." For example, we could simplify the definition by saying that "a person is any human being over 18 years old." With this new perspective, we create an alternative criterion for defining "person," and everything related to this term conforms to this new criterion.

It's important to note that different individuals may or may not agree with a particular criterion. However, the truth, in the sense of what exists in material and observable or non-observable terms, does not lie in the definition itself but in the objects and the interactions of objects that the definition implies. This is because, for anything, we can always conceive of another criterion to define it, as criteria are generated by us.

Take, for example, the case where we define a "human being" as a cell with 46 chromosomes that follows its genetic program and develops into an individual with certain characteristics. In this definition, consider a human embryo, which is an example

of this category. However, we might wonder what happens with an embryo that has more or fewer chromosomes than 46, as occurs in certain individuals. According to this latter criterion, strictly speaking, they would not be considered "human beings." Nevertheless, we can establish another criterion that includes this group and also call them "human beings."

It's important to emphasize that there is no intrinsic necessity in reality, regarding the entities that make up reality, to adopt one criterion over another. The assignment of a term to a specific set of things is ultimately an arbitrary construction, based on the associations made by an individual.

Therefore, the criteria we use to define something do not determine its truth or its real existence independently of the subject. There are embryos that develop into what we call "human beings" or that we designate as such. However, what is true, what effectively exists, are the embryos, the different stages of development, the processes they undergo, and the interactions of matter in these processes. The existence of organisms, like the one writing these pages, is also a real fact. All these manifest in reality as relationships between objects and phenomena. In contrast, the criteria used to define these entities do not have a real existence in the external reality beyond what an individual thinks and decides.

This can also be expressed as follows: "A person is an individual with a certain level of cognitive development, as determined by the subject making the definition." However, basing ethics or rights solely on the notion of a person, whether due to the presence of 46 chromosomes, majority age, or a certain level of intelligence, may be insufficient and fragile for defending such crucial principles as ethics and rights. These arguments, in my opinion, seem more like simplistic responses, akin to "just because." Saying, "Why should we respect someone's rights? Just because," can even open the door to those who wish to violate others' rights.

People often debate endlessly about the definition, arguing over the criteria for determining what constitutes a person. Some claim that "this" is a person, while others argue that it is not, that it is something different. However, it is important to understand that the criteria in question are not inherent characteristics of objective reality beyond the subjects who establish them. It often seems as if people are trying to find this criterion within objective reality itself.

What we can objectively determine in objective reality is what is associated with the notion of a person. In other words, once we have defined a criterion, we can objectively assess whether a human being, regardless of being under or over 18 years old, meets that criterion to be considered a person. It is important to highlight that, although some argue that since it is the subject who establishes the criteria for what is ethical, moral, beautiful, etc., ethics and morality can be perceived as subjective, there is actually a degree of objectivity in these matters. The claim that these issues lack importance is based precisely on a particular criterion. Objectively, we can determine if something is ethical, moral, or beautiful, but this evaluation will depend on the specific criterion used. The notion of ethics, in fact, is fundamental, as will be explained later.

The definitions of concepts seem to be a sort of loop, a continuous repetition of the same meaning that does not appear to be anchored in a solid foundation that supports the understanding of a concept or criterion. This impression arises if we consider mental life as if it were made up exclusively of words, without taking into account that terms connect with other perceptual experiences and internal states, such as images, smells, or elements perceived in reality. Thus, definitions find their foundation when they move beyond the confines of language to activate associations related to perceptions and internal states, such as moods. The meaning of a concept is configured through these networks of associations in our minds and the expression of the sensory, which refers to both external reality and the subjective mental states of the individual, such as moods, which are part of these associations.

What exists in reality is a complex interconnection of elements, and our understanding of these elements is based on the associations of concepts that reside in our minds. These associations can arise from the direct perception of reality or be generated by our minds, in the case that there is no external reality, and in that case, they would be consistent with our conscious experience or be unidentifiable with the rest of our conscious experience. These associations, for example, can arise from previously established structures that do not have an independent existence in reality as separate entities. The concept of "person" fits into this latter category, where the criterion of the term exists in our mind, and the understanding of what "person" implies depends on the associations that accompany it. There is no intrinsic necessity, existing independently of the individual, for these associations to relate to the term "person." This ultimately depends on the subject (or subjects) who establish them; the criterion is

a personal construction, not an abstract entity that exists independently in objective reality. What one can perceive in reality are concrete objects, such as embryos, cells, their processes, and the interactions of matter, but the nature of the terms themselves and their assignment to the relationships between objects ultimately depends on the individual's mind.

However, the question arises whether a relationship between elements in reality is an actual existence or merely a construction of our minds. The fundamental question is: what truly constitutes a relationship? Often, people refer to this as a kind of connection that isn't clearly defined. It is possible that the elements are, in essence, discrete entities, and what we call a "relationship" is itself another entity or object. Consider, for example, the statement "a cup is on the table." We could conceive of this as the existence of a state involving both the cup and the table, with the symbol "+" representing the idea of "being on." In this context, we might argue that "+" or "being on" represents the relationship between the two elements. However, it is important to note that other entities are involved in this relationship.

The idea of "being on" is based on the nature of the table, the cup, gravity, and other elements. Could these characteristics be considered entities in themselves, and the relationship actually manifests as the effective interaction of all these components? Ultimately, the issue is not whether a relationship of elements exists in reality, but rather the criterion or definition we assign to a term. It might be that our concept of "relationship" represents an association of elements that we create and that does not necessarily reflect what occurs in objective reality. Therefore, if we maintain that an association of elements in our minds can be used to denote a relationship of elements in reality, which may or may not be the case, we must establish a criterion for defining what we consider a "relationship."

I propose that, in reality, the concept of "relationship" implies the actual occurrence of interaction between various entities. In this sense, the "effective occurrence of entities" represents any process or fact that we perceive as "concrete," and a relationship of elements is precisely the result of the effective happening of multiple entities.

The associations of concepts formed in our minds reflect, in a certain sense, the real interactions between elements in reality, though this might be considered a mere possibility. It is plausible that our conceptual associations represent a relationship of elements that may or may not exist in the reality outside our perception. In my

approach, I consider that what we call a "relationship" (following the previously established criterion) indeed manifests in a world independent of our conscious experience. The idea of a relationship in reality derives from our conscious experiences, which are consistent with each other and seem to indicate the presence of relationships in a world external to our perception. I work with the assumption that otherwise, an association of concepts we create would be confirmed in our conscious experience, which would be an observation of what we generally call reality. This is anticipated in the conceptual association, and this is essentially our expectation.

The need for our predictions to sometimes come true and sometimes not suggests that there must be a certain consistency and coherence in reality, as well as rules governing these relationships. While it is possible that we ourselves generate these rules, they sometimes hold true and sometimes do not, raising the question of what factors are involved. Although there are several possibilities, our assumptions point to the existence of a reality external to us. Our criterion for determining truth often relies on whether the conceptual associations we hold imply relationships in objective reality or in the conscious experience we perceive.

Additionally, the term "relationship" can also refer, in certain contexts, to whether one element has an effect on another, such as when we talk about a causal relationship between A and B, indicating that A causes B. In these terms, we can also use the notion of "relationship."

Statements regarding value judgments, morality, ethics, and aesthetics arise from the establishment of criteria, meaning we can determine what is objectively ethical, for example, only based on a specific criterion. However, it is important to recognize that these criteria do not exist independently outside the minds of individuals. These statements about ethics, morality, or value are implicit in each individual's personal criteria. For instance, saying that it is morally wrong to terminate a human embryo is based on a specific criterion, but there could be a different criterion where this is not considered wrong. None of these criteria possess objective validity as abstract entities that exist independently of the subjects' perceptions in reality. The choice of one criterion over another relates solely to the nature and perspective of the individuals.

In the context of criteria, there is always the possibility of finding or generating alternative criteria. This is one of the arguments against decisions based on "duties" or "obligations" that are considered abstract entities imposed on individuals in moral or

ethical matters. According to this argument, such concepts are incoherent since these entities do not have an existence separate from the minds of the subjects ultimately. This point relates to morality and the association of concepts found in our minds. Another perspective related to this topic will be discussed concerning the delineation of what is real.

There is no absolute justification for certain value, ethical, or aesthetic judgments, in the sense that they are neither a priori truths nor logically deducible from reality. We often attribute value judgments to things, but this reflects more about those making the judgments than about the things themselves, as things do not possess intrinsic value; they simply are. Concepts of "duties," "obligations," or "principles" do not manifest in objective reality; instead, they are generated by individuals and represent conceptual associations that exist in the mind of a subject but do not have an independent existence in objective reality ultimately. As a result, people can generate these notions arbitrarily, without implying absolute justification.

Given the diversity of opinions, any philosophical doctrine or reflection on things that doesn't clarify whether the conceptual associations of such criteria truly exist only offers an exploration with no utility for understanding reality. However, when the same premises presented in a reflection are used for its refutation, this activity cannot be considered a waste of time in the philosophical realm.

The solidity of an argument or its relationship to reality that can be verified arises when the limits are explored. This applies both to reflections based on criteria considered absolute and independent of reality and to those related to facts referring to relationships between objects in reality that are empirically verifiable. In both cases, it is always possible to present a valid counterargument or generate another criterion. So, what remains for us? The task of explaining the conceptual associations that support the criteria and specifying that the reflection is based on those criteria. Additionally, one must consider the limits, what is immutable, and must be accepted as a reference point to refute the reflection or what is established within it. Reflections based on verifiable facts are not a waste of time, as they directly relate to what is real and verifiable. These reflections involve reasoning and arriving at propositions that can be practically confirmed. The relevant question here is whether, in fact, they can be confirmed.

Often, we have intuitions about the nature of things based on individual perceptions. For this reason, we might initially believe there is a single correct and

absolute definition for a concept. However, this conviction fades upon deeper analysis. We can claim, for example, that freedom consists of doing what we desire or that freedom refers to any action not determined by causes. These statements are influenced by an intuitive notion of individual experience. However, we cannot assert that, regardless of the definitions we use, there is a single objectively true definition. This would imply that the necessary, direct, and evident definition of a relationship between objects exists in reality, and we simply perceive this abstraction. In reality, the meaning of a term is constructed through the conceptual associations the term implies, connecting with other elements of knowledge.

Thus, the statements presented here are based on certain criteria, which may or may not be shared by others. In the process, specific associations are established that refer to relationships presumed to occur effectively. My goal here is to explore certain limits. At the same time, I attempt to reveal how some of the conceptual associations derived from certain criteria lack validity.

This opens up the possibility of having various definitions of God, for example. There can be a fact or entity (like an object) called T, determined by t (another factor) in each situation. This is because any state or action of T depends on the effective prior existence (at a more basic structural level, as will be explored later) of t. In this context, T cannot determine t, as it requires t to manifest first for any state of T to be possible. In other words, a dynamic state represents a series of causes, causes at a structural level (as will be described later). This principle applies to all dynamic states and is the criterion I propose.

Reality and its structure are not governed by a single dynamic state. However, for an intelligent entity, such as humans, for example, this principle remains valid. An entity exhibits a dynamic state when it engages in an action. An action represents a process that effectively occurs, supported by a sequence of causes (which has a limit) or a "prior" cause (if the cause of the event were the most fundamental structural form of reality). This is the criterion I establish.

In the case of an entity attributed with characteristics such as being intelligent, conscious, omnipotent, and omnipresent, as described by the term "God" (this is another criterion), it becomes valid to consider this entity as T, like other entities, because its characteristics require an action (as discussed in various conceptions of God). Therefore, God, in this sense, is subject to a factor t that cannot be determined by itself,

and consequently, cannot possess all the characteristics previously established by the criterion, as the conceptual associations of the criterion contradict each other. Although the criterion exists in people's minds, not all the associations it implies can occur in reality, as some associated elements contradict each other.

If it were asserted that everything depends on God, in reality, everything would depend on you. This would be incorrect if reality did not follow the logical structure described, which is inherent to reality, so to speak. To express any claim about reality, we must accept this logical structure. What lies beyond reality has no existence and cannot exist. What we consider causality manifests in various forms in our perception of the world and ultimately underlies all these manifestations. Often, a specific causal relationship arises from our simultaneous understanding and ignorance of things.

What I present here refers to the effective process of an action, which, as I mentioned, represents a continuous procedure. Often, what we call causality relates to discrete events and is closely linked to the concept of induction. However, I am not referring to the concept of causality in this sense, but rather to that of action. What I consider action manifests as a continuous process, at least on the scale to which we are accustomed. For example, what we typically label as causality would be equivalent to discrete moments within the process of action.

In practice, we identify a fact B and a fact A, and we assert that A is the cause of B. This is based on the observation that every time A occurs, B also occurs. However, this reasoning is not a logical necessity. Our inferences are derived from both our observations and our limitations in the complete understanding of phenomena. This perspective involves a probabilistic notion when we try to determine the cause of an event.

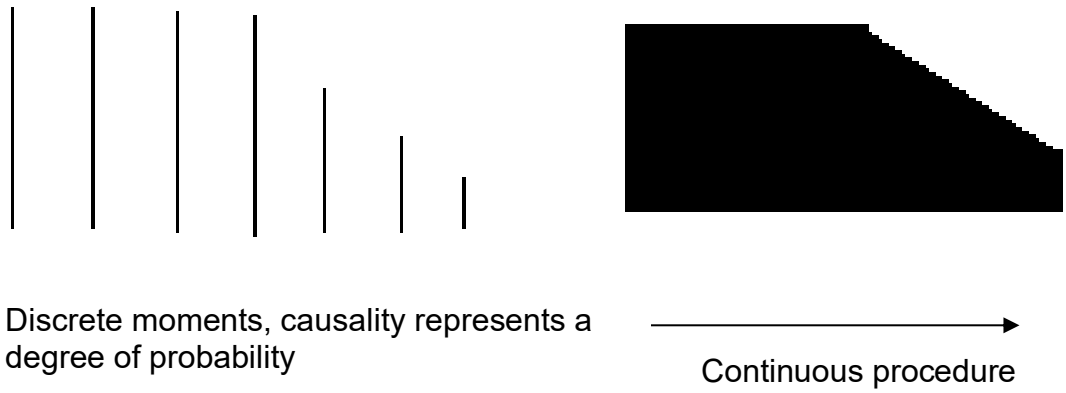
Consider the following situation: in a classroom, everything seems oriented towards subject A. Every time subject B is present, a notebook appears on the floor. A does not directly witness B placing the notebook there, but somehow it seems to them that B is the cause. If this were the case, it would be established that the cause of the notebook on the floor is B. However, this description only addresses discrete moments and lacks information about what happens between the presence and observation of B, and the observation of the notebook in its final location.

However, if we could observe the continuous process in which B attends classes and places the notebook on the floor, we could not speak of causality in the traditional sense. There would be no cause-and-effect relationship between B's presence (cause) and the notebook on the floor (effect); instead, there would be a continuous flow of actions, as initially proposed. In this context, causality would be reserved for specific moments.

A's complete observation of the entire process, namely B's behavior, would provide a solid understanding of why the notebook is in that place. In this approach, the truth is based on how accurately our perception of the facts can reflect the external world or reality. Thus, to truly understand why the notebook is on the floor, we would depend on how well our impressions and perceptions, derived from observing B's behavior, reflect what actually happens in A's external reality.

The uncertainty associated with our senses constitutes a significant limitation in our ability to acquire genuine knowledge about causal relationships and the effects underlying the phenomena of reality. However, this limitation is intrinsic to our approach to reality and the way we acquire knowledge about it. Simply relying on our senses is markedly different from using the scientific method, which presents itself as a more effective way to gain understanding about the facts.

When it is impossible to trace the ongoing process, the only alternative is to observe the closest possible discrete moments in order to attempt to understand, with greater probability, that process. However, this leads us to the same dilemma previously mentioned, where we have only limited knowledge in the form of isolated points rather than an understanding of the continuous flow of events, as in the previous case.



Nonetheless, it could be argued that action breaks down into a succession of discrete moments that create the impression of continuity. In this sense, our conception of causality refers to isolated instants or events within a given period, and this conception depends on our ability to observe these moments. Therefore, we would have a notion of causality where there is no necessary inference from one moment to another. This means that when we say that, given a prior condition, the next moment will likely arise, the interval of time would be composed of other discrete moments. However, determining one discrete moment from another can only be done after having observed such a relationship in the past, unless we know the underlying causal structure behind these discrete moments. This, of course, would not be a necessary determination.

If we continue dividing these moments, we would reach a point where there is practically no appreciable difference from one moment to another. Although there is technically a difference, it gradually decreases as the proximity between moments increases. In this context, a discrete nature in probability is established, which becomes more significant as the moments become more extensive. This, in turn, provides us with a greater degree of certainty about the truth of a fact. Certainty is linked to a set of discrete moments that we can subdivide to a greater or lesser extent, thus generating a higher or lower probability of certainty in relation to that set of moments.

As I mentioned earlier, it is essential to recognize that for a given effect, there cannot be an "infinite sum of causes" or, in other words, an infinite number of causes acting simultaneously. Otherwise, the effect would not manifest. Similarly, there cannot be an infinite division of moments or discrete points, as this would lead to the impossibility of reaching the state known as the "effect." In a scenario where a prior point is subjected to an infinite subdivision of states, the "effect" point would never be reached. Each moment would be preceded and followed by an infinite number of moments in its decomposition, making it impossible for a determined point to exist. In reality, a limit is required, a discrete step from one state to another, which implies a minimum distance traveled by an object, in which it can transition from state A to state B without passing through any state prior to B.

Consequently, this limit to the change of state, which establishes discrete states from state A to state B, is essential to corroborate what we observe and for things to have existence.

When we consider a line, we imply its capacity to be divisible, allowing us to highlight distinct points along it. The question that arises is how we might conceive of a minimum length in this context. The notion of length presupposes the existence of a space containing other lengths. Thus, the question lies in how we might identify a minimum length that is necessary for the previously mentioned concepts.

The premise is that there could be a minimum length for state changes, where an object cannot move in a magnitude smaller than this length. However, this does not necessarily imply the existence of a minimum length in relation to space. It seems that the possibility of an infinite subdivision of space remains a viable option. What is required is a discrete jump from state A to state B, which is necessary, and there should not be an infinite continuum that obstructs this transition.

This discrete advance is essential for the observation of the world as we experience it, as a minimum structural unit is demanded as the underlying cause of events. The notion of infinity could be preserved in a finite space, even though matter only advances in discrete steps, which sometimes leads to the assertion that the mathematical abstraction of infinity exists only in our minds and not outside of them. Although there are no limits to the cognitive segmentation we can carry out, there is a limit regarding movement, which develops in discrete steps from one state to another.

Time, on the other hand, is different in this context, as it would not be subject to infinite divisibility. Instead, time refers to the various states of an object, and a time lapse refers to a finite number of states between specific states. This is the criterion I propose. For things to manifest as we experience them, the existence of a causal limit is required, that is, a fundamental structure, and a discrete step from one state to another. Likewise, a limit is needed regarding the space that matter can cover in its movement.

In this consideration, we encounter a sequence of discrete moments in which a jump occurs from one state to another. This jump prevents an infinite subdivision of state changes, which would manifest as a series of transitions through an infinite "continuum." Such an infinite subdivision would hinder what we observe in reality, specifically the transition from one state to another and the movement of an object from state A to state B.

This jump, representing the step from one discrete point to another, implies that an object can cover a limited distance in the process of state change. This limitation is

established through discrete state changes, without allowing the existence of an intermediate state. It is important to note that this limit could vary depending on particular circumstances.

Wittgenstein suggests that asserting something like "the sun will rise tomorrow" represents a judgment based on previous observations, but it is not an a priori truth in the sense of atomic facts. For a more detailed understanding of this aspect, references 1 and 2 in the "References" section at the end of this work should be consulted.

Following my previous argument about states and causality, if we consider the continuum composed of numerous discrete moments that constitute a fact, we can obtain some certainty about what is happening. However, what will happen in the future becomes a mere hypothesis. This is because, as I will continue to elaborate, one state is not the cause of another state; rather, it is the structure, the configuration of something, that determines the states. If we assert that something will happen based solely on the states of something, we are speaking of a probability rather than a concrete fact.

Some would argue that every prediction is a probability of something occurring, not a certain fact. This leads us to differentiate between what has a probability of happening but is not certain and necessary, and what will effectively happen without alternatives. Nevertheless, asserting that "the sun will rise" is based on a fact, considering what we know about the nature of the phenomenon if we consider the specific event. In other words, from my perspective, based on our knowledge of the structures of things, we could predict and assert with certainty that the sun will rise tomorrow, beyond being a mere hypothesis.

To achieve this certainty, we must integrate our knowledge of structures with the structural form of the elements involved. This structure is what determines the specific state of the object and, ultimately, causality. Otherwise, it would seem that we are left with primary sensory impressions and limit our ability to analyze reality and understand what is happening. In some cases, we will only be able to establish probabilities that something will occur, but in other cases, where our knowledge of the structures allows, we will know with certainty that something will happen. Beyond the discrete state in which something is, we do not know if the sun will rise tomorrow, but taking into account the structural causes of things, we could foresee the state they will be in.

Continuing with the previously discussed concept of states, it is appropriate to establish a criterion for addressing the concept of causality concerning separate discrete moments. This distinction of discrete moments implies the interval an object can cover based on its ability to change from one state to another, that is, the nature of its minimum possible change from state A to state B. It is relevant to recognize that, given our cognitive capabilities, it is highly problematic to approach an event this way. Our certainty regarding what we observe is diminished, as are the instruments we use as extensions of our senses. However, this approach to causality fails to capture the true underlying reason behind an event, that is, how a specific state is reached, since a previous state is not ultimately the cause of a subsequent state.

Although an event on our scale may seem like a continuous process, it is important to recognize the existence of a sequence of discrete moments. From this perspective, is it appropriate to talk about causes and causality? From a causal perspective, an event has a cause that, in turn, can be the effect of another cause, but this chain of causes cannot extend infinitely. Otherwise, the effect or event would not be sustained, and at some point, an uncaused cause must arise. This idea originates from the very structure of existence in its most fundamental sense.

In the context of discrete moments, I assert that causality cannot be considered purely from a temporal perspective. The transition from state A to state B represents precisely that: a transition from one state to another. In this process, an entity moves from A to B, but state A is not the direct cause of state B. The object initially exists in state A and then evolves to state B due to some inherent reason within the object itself. The flow of time, the movement of the object, its change of state, and the way it unfolds are not consequences of a previous state but rather the result of the object's intrinsic nature and material structure.

The transition implies the manifestation of possible states, but these states are simply manifestations of the object's structure itself. This structure is the cause of the various state manifestations in which the object presents itself. In the context of the material universe, it is maintained that matter manifests in discrete states. The possibility of a state and the transition to another state derive from a specific space-time nature and a particular material structure. Ultimately, states are discrete, and one does not directly cause the other. Instead, states represent simple manifestations of the space-time nature and material structure, and the way the state change occurs, as well as the

nature of the subsequent state, are fundamentally determined by the material structure involved. This structure is the cause of how states manifest and the changes that occur from one state to another.

Whenever we address the concept of matter, we implicitly assume the existence of space, even when considering the most fundamental and ultimate form of matter, which is posited as uncaused. This assumption entails the notion of an ultimate structural cause, equally uncaused, and thinking about this cause requires the presupposition of spatial extension. Spatial dimensions seem to be an intrinsic feature of reality itself.

On the other hand, the notion of time is more complex and elusive. I propose that time be defined as the process of state change. Under this criterion, time would simply exist as each state that comes into being necessarily implies a state change, and this process of change constitutes time itself. In this sense, time would be an inherent entity of reality. This raises the question of whether a primitive reality could have existed that was static, without state changes, and thus without time. To address this question, we must begin with what already exists, since what does not exist cannot give rise to causes.

State change simply exists or begins to exist due to a cause rooted in the structure of reality. However, the second option presents a dilemma, as it would lack an underlying reason for its occurrence. The presence of a reason or cause for a state change implies, in turn, the existence of a previous state. However, that previous state must be considered as something that simply exists without the need for a cause.

If we consider the fundamental structure of things and there are no state changes, the possibility of a state change would imply a modification in that structure. But this modification would only be possible if, in the first place, there were a state change. Thus, we arrive at a paradox where the existence of state changes is necessary to allow for the modification of the structure, but the modification of the structure is also necessary for state changes to occur.

Understanding the true space-time nature of reality will require a rigorous approach based on logic and observation, as well as continuous and persevering effort.

The only form of causality that exists is rooted in the very structure of phenomena. In other words, the fundamental reason behind anything derives from structural causes. These structural causes are the only ones capable of providing a true explanation, while

other "causal" explanations merely describe occurrences. The simple discrete transition from one moment to another cannot serve as the basis for a caused process. For instance, when throwing an object to the ground, it falls, but if there is no real causality in the temporal sense, how can we explain that the object reaches a specific state?

Discrete moments are a feature of the temporal dimension, but ultimately, this is simply a manifestation of how energy and matter interact in the context of reality. This underlying interaction cannot be considered as something caused; rather, it emanates from the fundamental structure of existence. As I mentioned earlier, reality is composed of entities that are, in themselves, existence and that belong to the set of existence. Ultimately, this structure cannot have a cause. These entities are involved in processes that encompass various states or specific events.

The phenomena observed in our environment represent the manifestation in the temporal dimension of the structures that shape things. Despite the existence of discrete moments in these phenomena, these moments do not constitute causes in themselves. The cause of a "fact" lies in the way matter and energy interact in nature, which ultimately arises from the primordial structure of what exists.

Thus, we can conceive of a material nature that occupies space and the change of discrete states (what we consider as time, from my perspective). It is important to emphasize that processes represent states or events and that these states are like snapshots of structures. However, these states cannot be considered as the causes of other particular events or processes. As I mentioned earlier, states themselves do not constitute causes; instead, the different states that manifest depend on the structure of the involved matter and energy.

However, the way we express ourselves, that is, our language, can lead to confusion in this context. When we say that something is the result of a process, we must understand that the process precedes that something, and the structural causes of the states of that process, along with other structures, give rise to that something. This is the meaning I assign to such statements, for example, when I refer to the cause of something in relation to processes, as I do later when talking about neuronal activity. We could also consider the change of state itself as a cause, not the state, but the act of changing state.

Therefore, all activity refers to different states of a structure. This activity manifests first, so that another activity can occur later, but the fundamental cause lies in the structure we are considering, that is, the states of that structure. All activity, that is, the different states of a structure, constitutes different manifestations of causes rooted in the structure itself.

Causes, with regard to underlying structures, are intrinsically linked to what we call the temporal dimension. Although this temporal dimension is not completely separable and is related to space, it is likely related to the ultimate form of existence. Considering what has been mentioned earlier, a cause that gives rise to a phenomenon requires time, that is, a process of state change through which it manifests. Ultimately, it is difficult to conceive of a cause for time, as time itself simply "is." However, time does not provide an exact explanation of the cause of a phenomenon; rather, it is the medium through which the true cause manifests. In the absence of time (or state change), the underlying structural cause would not lead to a state, and therefore, time must be inherent to the form of existence.

Reality is characterized by a specific form. The way entities interact acts as the cause of higher-level phenomena, those that represent the conjunction of certain entities that we observe in reality. The diversity of possible behaviors in our universe, as well as in other hypothetical universes, is based on the structure or form of existence, which allows for a wide range of possibilities in determining the behavior of things. From this perspective, causes reside at a structural level.

For example, the possibility of a molecule's existence depends on the elements that compose it, their properties, and their behavior. The cause of an organism, in an elemental sense, is related to the molecule, and the ultimate cause lies in the form or structure of existence, that is, reality itself. The processes in which these components, such as the organism, the molecule, and others, are involved are linked to the temporal dimension due to the changes of state they undergo. However, these discrete moments do not constitute causes in themselves.

So, what can we understand by the term "acting"? The term refers to any phenomenon that has one or more underlying causes that trigger it.

For example, consider the bonding of two molecules, which is explained by the interactions between their electric charges. If we break down the bonding process into

discrete moments, it is important to note that these moments do not constitute causes in themselves. Rather, they represent manifestations in time of that event, translated into discrete states. The origin of the cause lies in the entities involved, which in this case are the molecules as a collection of fundamental entities organized in a certain way. The ultimate cause is found in the form of existence as a structure, which can give rise to our universe and its physical constants, among other aspects. Causes are intrinsically linked to structures that trace back to the ultimate form of existence.

This primordial form, which represents the limit, simply "is," and for this reason, it is not susceptible to change or modification in its structure or form. This entity does not possess properties beyond its structural form and what this form implies. In other words, it is not possible to attribute to this primordial entity, in terms of matter, the ability to change its own form. Any change in the form of this entity would imply a cause beyond its limit structure, which does not exist. We can only conceive of properties of change in objects with respect to their actions, but in the case of this primordial form, which is the fundamental material entity, there is no possibility of modifying its form, as it has no additional components.

In contrast, space possesses the property of curvature. It is worth noting that the fabric of space may not be considered a single structure. It is important to highlight that, from my perspective, the modification of a primordial material entity is illogical. Perhaps we should not apply the same logic to space that we apply to matter, as they might be fundamentally different entities: matter and space. The curvature of space may not be related to changes in matter, as might be understood from a material perspective.

The fact that this is true for space does not necessarily mean it is equally incomprehensible for matter in its primordial state. We must consider that we are dealing with fundamentally different entities: matter and space. It is possible that space does not actually curve, and that there is another explanation for the observations suggesting otherwise. Or, space might not be a distinct entity with particular characteristics, like matter, but rather the extension that things occupy and their separation. Even if there were some modification, the primordial entity would still be too simple, if not impossible, to harbor intelligence, consciousness, or intention. If there were no modification, as I maintain, such attributions would be definitively improbable.

Some might argue that we should consider God similarly to how we would consider space if it were an entity distinct from matter, with completely different properties,

without applying one to the other. However, the essential arguments I present in these propositions regarding God, such as whether God can give meaning to things, transcend the particular nature of what God is made of and apply independently of His composition. These arguments go beyond the substance of God and delve into the general logical form of things, in terms of what is possible or not.

It's as if we were to say that an object follows a curved path in its motion, either due to the curvature of space in a solar system or because it slides over a curved surface. In both cases, curvature is essential for the object to follow a curved trajectory. This is what both cases have in common, regardless of the particular structures involved or the specific substances.

In the case of God, I will focus on the concepts of structure, form, and action, in relation to fundamental principles, and the different conclusions we can draw by analyzing these aspects in themselves, regardless of what the specific structure and form of God or His actions might be. In other words, the logic of whether God can give rise to something particular or not will depend on the inherent nature of God. If we do not know the specific nature of God, we will have limitations on what we can assert about Him. However, we can discuss many issues about God in terms of considering Him as a primordial form or agent, for example, since the notion of form and action applies to all existing substances, known or unknown. There is a primordial reality and a concept of action that transcends the diversity of substances or entities, known or yet to be known.

In the following propositions, I refer to causes in terms of their structural character. In this context, a causal limit, that is, a primordial structure, along with the minimal discrete change (though its magnitude might vary) of the structure, which is determined by the structure itself in its various states, are essential elements for our observation of things as we perceive them, and to avoid the presence of contradictions.

There has been debate about the existence of ontological chance. In this context, the way an entity experiences a change of state, for example, could not be considered ontological chance, since the process of state change is conditioned by the inherent structure of things. The notion of ontological chance would apply to what exists, insofar as there are no causes that determine certain aspects of reality, such as the way state changes occur.

Regarding the structure of an entity, it cannot be said to lack causes, as its configuration depends on its individual components. However, the way these elements organize within the entity could be considered independent of the structure itself. The initiation of existence, when there is nothing, no entity or form of existence present, is a complex issue, as there is no reference point for something to configure in a particular way. Entities simply exist and organize themselves into specific forms, without an "initiation of existence" in the conventional sense. The change of state of an entity would be determined by the entity itself, acting as a structural cause. If the manner in which an entity changes state is considered ontologically random, questions about the coherence of reality could arise. Could this not lead to contradictions?

In such a case, the determination of the configurations of things would not be limited only by structure but also by a randomness that would exist in reality. However, this randomness would be constrained by the structural characteristics of reality. If randomness implied contradictions in reality, then it would not be part of existence. To suppose that the way an entity changes state lacks a cause would be arbitrary, an ontological chance. Nevertheless, if it is in the very nature of how an entity changes state to have a determining cause, it is impossible to assert that there is no cause for the change of state, as this would be incoherent and illogical.

Since the process of changing states is intrinsically linked to the structure of reality, particularly to the material structure, this process must be configured in a way that avoids the emergence of contradictions when determining such change. At the most fundamental level, things operate according to a model where states change discretely from one to another. Nonetheless, the entity has always existed, in the sense that its existence is continuous and does not cease at any moment. In one state, the entity occupies a particular point, and in the next, it is at another point, always maintaining its existence without interruption.

In the metaphysical realm, it is essential to consider the notion of movement in relation to state changes. Displacement plays a fundamental role in shaping reality as we perceive it. However, it is pertinent to question why an object would move in the first place. We can refer to the inertia of an object or the energy it possesses, but still, what motivates its manifestation in another state?

Let's think about the static image of an object in motion: why should it acquire an additional state? This question isn't just about the premise that since it’s in motion, it

must adopt another state. We must remember that movement is discrete, and there are particular, discontinuous states of things rather than a continuous transition. So, what justifies an object experiencing an additional state? The mere existence of a particular state doesn't necessarily imply the presence of another.

Without a change of state, energy and inertia would be meaningless, and the object would remain unchanging, without experiencing any changes. I consider the change of state to be a phenomenon that is distinct from other characteristics of objects—not disconnected or separate from them, but confined to the entity of the object without being determined by its structure, energy, or inertia.

This concept of change of state aligns closely with what we commonly call time. It's plausible that a change of state could occur without movement, especially if the subsequent state is identical to the previous one. In this case, we could think of movement as the manifestation of how something transitions from one state to another. The movement of an object is governed by its existing structure and the presence of a change of state. Energy and inertia dictate the form of movement but do not constitute the movement itself. The notion of movement involves a transition from one state to another, allowing us to conceptualize movement as the change from one state to another.

The variation in how an object moves depends on the specific structure of the matter. We can consider the change of state as a phenomenon without an apparent cause, since for a cause to result in an eventual effect, there must be a change of state. Therefore, it's challenging to attribute a cause to time before its existence. The idea that the change of state is always present leads us to the hypothesis that time slows down when the manner in which the change of state occurs is different. If time were to stop at some point, if that were possible, it would mean that state 1 of an entity remains unchanged and constant.

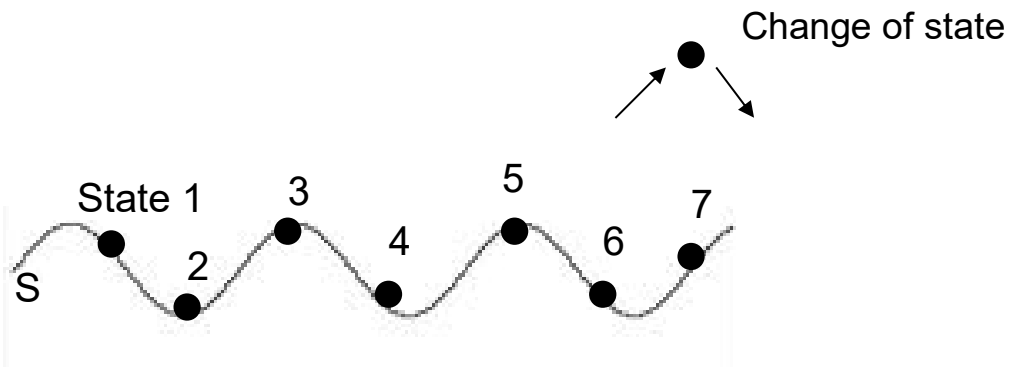
The nature of this change of state depends on the matter itself, not on the occurrence of the change, which is an inherently causeless process. We can conceive of this relationship as follows: the concept of time essentially refers to the change of state. However, theories that propose a beginning of time, such as the Big Bang, don't necessarily contradict this idea. Our universe could be just one of many within a larger matrix, a broader reality in which changes of state and causes lead to a specific universe where time begins.

When we raise the question of the time required to complete a task, we are essentially inquiring about the sequence of successive states needed to accomplish that task. If we imagine ourselves standing at a certain height without any support, we would experience an imminent fall, as there would be nothing to hold us up. In other words, the effect of standing without falling is intrinsically linked to a cause, specifically, the presence of a floor providing support.

If we attempt to introduce an additional cause, such as a second floor beneath us, we wouldn't achieve the desired effect, since this lower floor would also lack adequate support. This problem would persist even if we continued adding causes indefinitely—that is, an infinite number of causes. However, in this example, we can conclude that we would eventually find stable support in the form of the Earth's surface, preventing our fall.

It is important to note that this final cause, in this case, gravity, cannot be derived from another cause. If it could, it would invalidate the desired effect of standing on a floor without falling. Therefore, gravity, while we might attribute it to a cause at some level, must ultimately emerge as an intrinsic characteristic of reality, rather than being caused by some other element.

Consider:



Such a form can be given as an example of reality: the form


produces action and process-caused events (which are structurally determinant of a point's behavior). This manifests and arises from the form of existence, but for this, existence and its form simply have no causes. The second state of the point’s position is the valley of the structure, the third state is the crest of the structure, and so on.

If the point were a particle, it would have a structure that determines its form, continuing in this manner until reaching the primordial structure of existence, which will determine the next level, and the one that follows, and so on. The behavior will be determined by its structure, where causality extends to the limit of the primordial structure.

It is possible to equate an entity like God, defined according to the previously mentioned criteria, with existence in its fundamental form. In this context, we could argue that such an entity has the capacity to determine events in the world, but only in the manner previously described. This entity would not possess the ability to transcend itself to shape its own nature, resulting in a specific course of action. Essentially, it would be analogous to existence itself and lack a cause that provides an underlying reason for events to unfold in a particular way. This means it would not have the capacity to induce a causal process that leads to a specific configuration of events, as it would lack a causal entity.

In this sense, existence, in its original form, must allow, through various circumstances, the creation of universes with or without life. However, this capacity emanates from existence and its fundamental nature. If existence were not as it is, we would not be here, but this does not necessarily imply a manifestation of intelligence, at least not according to the conventional criterion of intelligence.

From the perspective of reality, limited by its fundamental characteristics and behavior, it is possible to contemplate non-causality as a concept representing its limit. In this context, there is a point at which action (not in temporal terms, but in structural terms) manifests. The form of reality constitutes a structure underlying the ultimate behavior of particles and similar elements. However, this structure does not originate in a causal sense at the higher structural level but is a "firm structure," a mere existence that lacks a cause and simply is.

It is important to highlight that this does not propose a notion of ontological randomness as an entity that "is" without cause in terms of structural action. When we talk about causes, we presuppose the existence of real entities. The concept of ontological randomness, as spontaneous behavior without causes, would suggest that in the manner in which a change of state occurs, possibilities could manifest without determinants. However, a key question arises: to what extent would this ontological randomness make reality as we observe it possible?

The behavior of matter seems to depend on its structure, and any randomness in the change of state might require certain restrictions on possibilities. Otherwise, we might encounter a scenario where entities disintegrate without apparent reason due to randomness in the change of state, which does not seem to correspond to what we observe in reality. Things follow a coherent pattern in their development, suggesting that ontological randomness must accommodate the possibilities allowed by the structure of entities. While the outcome may be random, it must not contravene the limitations imposed by the structure.

Ultimately, cause exists at a fundamental level in terms of structure, representing the structure itself of existence. In this reality, changes of state that are not determined by the structure of things are an inherent feature of said reality, in the way things are. However, when considering ontological randomness in relation to how something changes state, a conceptual difficulty arises. As mentioned earlier, asserting that an entity reaches a particular state without reason would be akin to saying that a ball bounces a certain way when thrown to the ground simply because there is a ball that was thrown and a change of state. Thus, the concept of ontological randomness appears improbable and illogical, given that the nature of how an entity changes state implies the presence of an underlying cause.

Therefore, I affirm the coexistence of form and act (action). Existence manifests as form, and act constitutes an inherent part of existence. The act, in its capacity as a causal sequence, can never be established as the cause of form, that is, of existence, because the act implies existence itself. The conception of God, whether as an act, cannot be the ultimate reason for the existence of things. We also cannot approach the notion of God from the perspective of form according to the previously established criteria, as it would not harbor intention, intelligence, consciousness, or other attributes, because these would imply an act.

There is no middle ground, no intermediate point between existence in its form and the act; one arises from the other. The idea of a prior state of act for form is unfounded, as form does not involve causes, and the act is the bearer of causes. To posit existence as a cause cannot arise from existence itself, since an effect cannot precede its cause. This would suggest that the cause is independent of existence, placing it beyond existence; however, outside of existence, there is no entity. The fundamental structure of things does not originate from a cause. Ultimately, there are no criteria, ends, or purposes for the entities that make up what we know as reality. It is inappropriate to argue that reality has a cause, which would result in an incoherence. Instead, we can assert that reality has no cause, indicating that what we call cause cannot be attributed to reality. The primordial and fundamental structure of things, their limit, is not governed by a cause in the sense of a lower structure supporting it, because if that were the case, that lower structure would become the limit. This reasoning could extend infinitely, but if there is no limit, that is, a structure that does not require the support of a lower structure, then the rest of the things, the effects, would lack existence.

If we consider that the meaning of element X depends on the existence of a cause X1 for that X, then we can understand the meaning of X as the presence of X1, within this criterion. Often, the notion of meaning is associated with that of purpose, so that the existence of a purpose in something implies that it has a meaning, generally related to its "reason for being." However, such considerations require the existence of a cause that gives meaning. Reality itself lacks a cause and, therefore, lacks meaning. Since every entity and process contained within reality does not have an ultimate cause, they also do not have an ultimate meaning. It is logical that there is no underlying cause for reality because in reality, we observe manifestations of phenomena composed of entities subject to causes (actions). Therefore, reality, ultimately, establishes at least one cause that does not originate from a previous cause. This premise is essential for our perception of reality as we experience it.

The concept of free will exists when we consider that a phenomenon is exempt from causes in the decision-making processes, under this specific criterion. The basis for free will, the mechanism that supports it, must operate independently of causes. However, in the case of conscious beings, like humans, decision-making processes are influenced by causal mechanisms, which would invalidate the existence of free will for humans according to this particular criterion of free will, as it pertains to a form of

action. The association of ideas implied by this criterion of free will, meaning the absence of causes, is opposed to observed reality.

Things can be defined in various ways, requiring different considerations. The names of elements refer to specific aspects based on the definition of those elements and what those names represent. The names that denote judgments about facts depend on definitions involving subjective and emotional aspects of subjects, aspects that do not objectively exist outside the subjects, since emotions and value judgments exist within subjects, not in the world external to them. Therefore, we cannot base ethics solely on reality as we commonly perceive it without considering the individual, even though the individual is part of the same reality.

To understand the universe, it is necessary to consider both causality and non-causality at a structural level. The limits of existence are unattainable, though it is important to clarify that this does not refer to structural limits. The reason is that such limits do not exist, and claiming that reality has an endpoint or that we cannot transcend the world implies the existence of limits that, in reality, do not exist. There is no separation dividing what is in this world from what could be beyond, since outside the world there is no independent existence; there is absolutely nothing. Even the concepts of space, time, and dimension do not impose limits on reality; instead, they might restrict our knowledge to a more limited subset within what we consider "the world" as the ultimate reality. Nevertheless, even in this context, reality persists, and we might be able to access knowledge of it or infer it, but always within the realm of existence. Beyond existence, there is nothing that can be inferred or known.

Ultimately, things lack inherent purpose. There is no fundamental reason justifying the existence of anything, as things simply exist. Therefore, it is impossible to posit a definitive purpose for things, since any purpose would have to lie beyond existence itself, which is not possible. Reflecting on our daily experiences: a purpose or goal determines an action, so something is a certain way to achieve that goal or purpose. However, the purpose must be pre-conceived before the action, before the configuration of any entity.

Now, if we apply this idea to reality as a whole, when something is configured with a purpose that materializes, that purpose must have pre-existed at a higher level than the entity. The existence of a limit in reality, a boundary determining the existence of things, would always require a purpose for something to be as it is. This would imply

that there is a purpose for the limit itself, and consequently a prior purpose for that purpose, and so on in an infinite cycle. There would never be an ultimate purpose, as there would always be another higher purpose sustaining the existence of things. Furthermore, if we speak of the limit of reality, all preconceived purposes materializing in reality would have to exist beyond reality, that is, outside of existence itself, which is a contradictory notion, as nothing can exist outside of existence.

The fact that there is a limit implies that there is no ultimate purpose, as there is no purpose or reason justifying that limit ultimately.

Thus, I assert that ultimately, there is no purpose in reality. This perspective seems more coherent due to its simplicity, as I consider that everything is a consequence of the form limit. If this form limit does not imply a prior purpose and does not require one, then it would be a purpose for everything else, which would mean that every subsequent aspect of reality should be preconceived in that form limit, like a code encompassing each particular aspect. If the development of reality has no endpoint, can the primordial form contain infinite presuppositions about what reality will become? If this were so, we would never find a purpose justifying every aspect of reality. Would this not imply the absence of a limit, making it so nothing could be maintained and anything would be possible, as I mentioned in previous arguments?

If, on the other hand, there were an endpoint, that would mean that not everything would be dictated by a purpose, as that endpoint would no longer be a means to another preconceived purpose. Therefore, I conclude that ultimately, there is no purpose in reality. This perspective would have ethical and moral implications for those who try to base these aspects on inherent purposes in reality. Ultimately, there would be no reason to follow something, a duty, or a principle if the possibility of doing or not doing it is permitted, as there would be no final purposes justifying that something. In my opinion, presupposing particular configurations in the primordial form makes reality more complex than necessary, because, as indicated, if the primordial, that is, the limit, has no attribute other than form and its implications, how is everything configured? Wouldn't those configurations negate the existence of the limit? In my opinion, it is simpler to consider that things are a consequence, and ultimately, it is the most logical. Also, as I mentioned in this proposition, is it possible to conceive of infinite presuppositions? Wouldn't this imply denying the existence of a limit that sustains everything and makes things possible? Ultimately, there is no purpose, and I consider that things are a

consequence. Moreover, beyond my observation of things I perceive as real, there are other aspects that incline me towards the idea of consequence as a preference. These aspects include my self-esteem and reward, because if the limit prefigures in its supposed presuppositions, and if these are possible, then the possibilities of reality would eventually come to an end, which would be analogous to death in a context of continuous development.

Even if we were to question the validity of the notion of a "reality external to ourselves" and consider it false or an illusion, an underlying reality would persist that represents the true essence of existence. Although what we normally conceive of as reality may not be what it appears to be, the argument presented here remains valid in the context of the reality we are aware of. We have at our disposal enough hypotheses and explanatory frameworks to understand phenomena without resorting to the existence of higher realities or asserting that reality outside individual experiences is non-existent. In fact, it is simpler to consider that there is a reality of which we are an integral part and that we can perceive. Therefore, even if someone suggested that reality is an illusion, it would not invalidate our capacity to make statements or propositions about that supposed reality, as our understanding and perception remain pertinent in the context of the reality we experience.

Part Two

Introduction and previous clarifications:

In the following sections of this philosophical essay, I will address the topic of our identity, that is, what we truly are. Often, in this discussion, I refer to brain and neuronal activity, and in the propositions that follow, I will specify what this activity entails. However, I believe this activity does not provide an adequate example of what we are in a fundamental sense. Nonetheless, such activity plays a crucial role in the development and expression of certain ideas. This is due to what I will later call "the unitary," an essential concept for addressing the question of identity and what we really are. In this context, "the unitary" might present differences in its nature compared to brain activity (as will be discussed in later sections). This divergence lies in my perspective that brain activity actually represents a process involving multiple structures and entities operating independently. This does not easily resemble a unitary concept. However, there is a possibility that a unitary entity exists at the neuronal level, and I have yet to become aware of it. These aspects will be clarified in later sections, but for now, let us consider neuronal activity in the initial discussions about identity simply as a tool to explain my arguments.

Regarding the question of the subjective, that is, "qualia" (the subjective manifestations of sensations and perceptions), and considering that the subjective, in terms of identity, is perceived as something unitary, the question arises whether this characteristic should be considered an integral part of neuronal activity. Some might argue that neuronal activity does not closely relate to subjective experience and that we are discussing different concepts. However, I will address these issues in the second part of this work.

Additionally, I have addressed and will continue to address the topic of associations in relation to our thoughts and meanings. These associations of things, in the context of meaning and rationality, refer to "qualia," that is, the subjective manifestations of sensations and perceptions. In turn, "qualia" imply other associations of things, such as those that might exist between neurons and their activity (even though this activity does

not constitute "qualia" in an identity sense, it might contribute to their existence in a secondary manner). In other words, "qualia" depend on the associations between various entities, in this case, the different patterns of neuronal activation underlying them, and together give rise to "qualia." If "qualia" are not identical to neuronal activity concerning identity, then we must consider that meaning primarily refers to associations at the level of neuronal activity, from which associations of "qualia" appear to emerge.

Additionally, when addressing subjective experience, in other words, "qualia," and their relationship with neuronal activity, a problem arises whose understanding may shed light on the nature of subjective experience. On several occasions, I mention that certain neuronal activity can refer to a "quale," though they are not necessarily identical. As I point out in the final propositions of this section, "qualia" could arise as a consequence of neuronal activity rather than being the activity itself. In this sense, I raise a question about whether neuronal activity can be considered the "quale," as I do not conceive of it as something unitary (this specifically refers to the concept of identity, which should not be confused with integration), a characteristic that, in my view, the "quale" must possess, as I will elaborate in the upcoming propositions.

However, the question arises of what happens when we reflect on subjective experience itself. If this experience is a result of neuronal activity, what type of neuronal activity can give rise to reflections on an experience that, in some way, seems independent of neuronal activity? If subjective experience, that is, "qualia," refers to something that is a result of neuronal activity, but the activity itself is not a particular "quale," how can neuronal activity generate reflections on something that is a result of such activity? The subjective dimension would seem to be on a different plane, so to speak, as a result of neuronal activity. If the brain reflects on this experience, it should apparently be the neuronal activity itself and not a result of it. On one hand, as I previously mentioned, I find it difficult to conceive of neuronal activity as something unitary, though there is a possibility that there is some unitary aspect in relation to neuronal activity and the structures involved, something I may not have perceived. Nonetheless, on the other hand, this might not pose an insurmountable problem. When we reflect on subjective experience, that reflection finds its expression in the plane of neuronal activity anyway.

Reflecting on the subjective experience of a color simply implies the activation of specific neuronal patterns that come into play when we perceive that particular color.

This results in the subjective experience of that color. When we talk about the subjective experience of the color red at the brain level, we are referring to the manifestation of neuronal activity associated with the color red. Essentially, by "asking the brain" if it subjectively experiences the color red, it must have an association with the manifestation of the neuronal activity related to red. In other words, when we talk about subjective experience (as I clarify in these propositions), we refer to the manifestation of "qualia," that is, the experience of perceiving the color red as a specific "quale." This implies that the brain associates the question with the manifestation of neuronal activity corresponding to red, which in turn refers to the spectrum of light of the color in question. Therefore, it could be concluded that the brain indeed experiences the color red.

If this reflection were not possible, if thinking about red from a subjective perspective, that is, the mental experience, were not viable given that "qualia" are a product of neuronal activity, then, according to my argument and the reflections I will present in this section, we would have to consider the existence of a "unitary" element at the level of neuronal activity that would relate to "qualia."

When I later mention whether neuronal activity is or is not the same as "qualia," I refer to whether neuronal activity constitutes the substantial matter of "qualia." In other words, to what entity that is part of what we call reality do "qualia" refer? In this sense, I raise the question of whether "qualia" are identical or not to this entity.

Asserting that a specific entity that is part of our reality is the "quale" is essential, in my view, for understanding "qualia." I believe that we could not delve into explaining how "qualia" arise and how they manifest without establishing an identity between "qualia" and an entity present in the world of matter and energy. In the following sections, I will address these issues in greater detail, exploring how something like neuronal activity and subjective experience could be the same thing, in what sense this unity could occur, even if they appear to lack similarity, as is often claimed.

When considering the possibility that "qualia" are a correlate or product of brain activity, we must highlight a relevant fact for the experimentation and understanding of my argument. In principle, it is feasible to disrupt "qualia" without affecting the underlying neuronal activity. Imagine a hypothetical experiment in which we eliminate certain "qualia" that a subject experiences, for example, the subjective experience of a visual object in front of them. If we ask the person if they are aware of the object, they

will answer affirmatively, even though the subjective experience of the object (the "qualia") has disappeared. This is because brain activity continues and cognitive functions remain intact. The subject would not notice the lack of "qualia," and everything would seem normal, as neuronal activity has not been affected. In this case, we cannot expect the person to report not seeing the object, as the mere absence of "qualia" would not be sufficient evidence. If this phenomenon does not result in a contradiction, then it is possible that the nature of consciousness differs, at least on some level, from the conception I present here. However, from my perspective, I do not observe contradictions, and this scenario would be feasible in principle.

This reasoning leads us to the notion of consciousness, and what I am proposing is the idea of consciousness in relation to the "qualia" that are part of our identity. I argue that what makes us conscious is subjective experience; that is, being conscious of something implies the presence of the subjective experience of it, which in turn manifests as a form of identity. However, at the brain level, conscious experience would be nothing more than the manifestation of specific neuronal activity, as I mentioned earlier. In the case of brain activity related to the "qualia" that form part of our identity, this would be activity integrated into a common circuit (as I will clarify later). Under normal circumstances, neuronal activation and "qualia" as identity occur simultaneously, as the activity generates the "quale" or, in terms of identity, is the "quale" itself. Therefore, I do not make a distinction between consciousness understood as the "qualia" that we are and consciousness understood as the manifestation of neuronal activity, as one implies the other.

That said, it is possible that there are "qualia" of which we are not conscious, and if these are related to neuronal activity, there could be neuronal activity that we do not consider conscious in the cerebral sense of consciousness. This is because it is not part of a common circuit with other patterns of neuronal activity that relate to various perceptions, ideas, and the construction of the self that constitute our identity. Regarding subjective experience at the cerebral level, which we are reflecting on, I think it is primarily based on the activation of neuronal patterns. The objection that could be raised, as I mentioned earlier, is how can the brain generate such reflection based on neuronal activity without having access to that experience in a subjective sense, since it seems disconnected from the flow of electrical charges and neurotransmitters.

A scientifically proven fact is that our thoughts, reflections, ideas, and ultimately what we express about our subjective experience involve activity at the cerebral level, which includes certain structures. This observation is fundamental since any cognitive or communicative manifestation implies the generation of specific brain activity (see reference 4 in the "References" section at the end of this work). At first glance, we might infer that to reflect on our subjective experience, the brain must somehow "capture" or "translate" that subjective experience, that is, what we usually refer to as the mental, in cerebral (biochemical and physical) terms. However, before delving into a complex explanation of how this could occur, and in line with what was mentioned previously, I must point out that such a process is inherently impossible due to what I describe as the "atomic notion of the brain" (a concept I will develop in later sections).

The "atomic notion of the brain" starts from the principle that nothing in brain activity is transmitted in the sense of a direct transfer and capture of what a specific neuronal pattern represents, such as the perception of an object. Instead, each neuronal pattern activates other patterns independently. Each of these patterns is like an autonomous universe in itself, so to speak. This conception prevents a subjective experience from being apprehended or perceived by the brain in the sense of being directly captured as such. Instead, what seems to occur is that brain activity is primary. For example, the perception of an object, along with the associated subjective experience, begins with the neuronal activity generated by the object in question. From this activity, from this specific neuronal pattern, other patterns are activated that relate to reflection and verbal or cognitive expression about the object. There is no need to postulate the existence of an entity that represents the subjective experience and that must "travel back" to activate neuronal patterns, since these patterns can directly activate other patterns effectively. Therefore, this perspective does not conflict with the notion of consciousness at the cerebral level, considering consciousness as the activation of a specific neuronal pattern.

We highlight that we cannot refer to a particular "quale" by itself but can only reflect on various "qualia." We cannot speak about the color red in isolation, just as a specific neuronal pattern related to the color red does not activate alone, but rather in conjunction with other patterns to which it is associated. Thus, subjective experience and our reflection on it reflect the brain's functioning and its "atomic" character, indicating that it is possible to reflect on subjective experience based on brain activity,

that is, within the same level. Consequently, even though "qualia" can be understood as a product of electrical activity, we continue to use the language and concepts we habitually use and continue to reflect on subjective experience and its explanation, even though our identity is on a different level. In other words, we do not consider "qualia" to be identical to neuronal activity.

According to the "atomic notion of the brain," when a neuronal nucleus or group of neurons activates another, there is no direct perception of that process—in other words, the activation itself is not experienced. This prevents the brain from accounting for the experience in terms of directly analyzing or processing its subjective character. Instead, what occurs is that one neuronal activity activates another neuronal activity. We have the capacity to relate a perception to other aspects, allowing us to reflect on why we experience something in a certain way. However, it does not seem necessary or feasible to establish an identity with neuronal activity to explain our capacity to reflect on subjective experience.

The "atomic notion of the brain" is a fundamental concept in this context. It is crucial to consider to what extent human experience would be affected if the brain were devoid of sensations or emotional states, such as satisfaction or sadness. In other words, if the subjective dimension of experience were irrelevant to the brain. As previously mentioned, the question arises of how we reflect on subjective experience, considering that this reflection depends on the brain. In that case, what exactly do we reflect on?

As I mentioned earlier, it seems relevant to consider that subjective experience and the brain must be the same, or that the mental experience and brain activity must have some point of connection and transfer if they were not identical. However, it is important to reiterate that the brain does not reflect on subjective experience itself; it can only express associations of concepts that refer to that subjective experience in the form of language. It is not capable of providing information about the unity of the experience, about a specific "quale." In other words, we cannot make statements about the color red itself in terms of subjective experience, nor does the same apply to other sensations; we can only talk about the associations, that is, the sets of concepts linked to the color red, for example.

This approach illustrates how the brain functions and its relationship with the previously mentioned "atomic notion." What happens is the activation of brain patterns, where one pattern activates another, but there is no perception or recognition of one by

the other. Each pattern is an independent system in itself. This characteristic prevents brain regions from experiencing or interpreting the subjective experience manifested by other patterns. In other words, no such reflection occurs at the cerebral level.

Thus, even if we consider that the mental is, in an identity sense, identical to the neuronal patterns themselves and not to another independent entity generated by brain activity, the dimension of subjective experience, the "qualia," turns out to be irrelevant to the brain's functioning. What matters at the cerebral level are the patterns that activate other patterns and, ultimately, modulate behavior and perceptions. Although it may sometimes seem difficult to conceive how sensations such as reward or sadness are not relevant at the cerebral level, it is important to highlight that these sensations, like simpler ones, are essentially "qualia" involving various elements and, like a sound, generate the activation of other patterns and consequently modulate behavior.

What is crucial at the cerebral level is that these patterns representing such sensations activate other patterns that influence behavior and perceptions. Some might argue that when we are startled by a sudden sound, initially this emotion is not related to a subjective experience. However, this does not diminish the idea that something we consider a sensation can exist in the form of patterns without "quale" and, by activating other patterns, produce responses. The difference between this process and the rest of the behavior that the brain can generate lies in the complexity and flexibility of the system. The flexibility of the system depends on the ability to maintain such representations and allow them to activate various patterns variably based on other patterns or perceptions. However, subjective experience, the "qualia," does not seem to influence or contribute to behavior at the cerebral level.

It is important to note that "qualia" mimic or replicate brain patterns, as I will detail in future discussions. When questions arise about why we experience certain sensations and not others at the level of subjective mental experience, neuronal patterns at the brain level explain why one pattern is not the same as another (why these sensations and not others) and why a pattern has a specific configuration (how or why we experience this sensation). The brain is capable of posing these questions and inferences about the brain patterns themselves, that is, at the neuronal level. Since the mental imitates or follows in some way what happens at the brain level, we are able to reflect at the subjective mental level on why we experience a certain mental experience and how it manifests, without

the brain needing to "experience" or be "conscious" of the subjective, that is, of the "qualia."

On the other hand, we often perform a mental experiment where we imagine changing the colors to which the brain patterns refer. Similarly, we can think about what would happen if we experienced sadness or pain instead of pleasure in response to something pleasurable. However, despite these changes, our reflections would remain the same. This raises the question: why are reward-related sensations the way they are and not experienced as pain or sadness? This might lead us to think again that the mental must be perceived by the brain. Nevertheless, we must not forget, as I mentioned earlier, that the mental does not arise out of nowhere but somehow reproduces what happens at the brain level.

Similarly, the brain replicates the structures of reality (which I will discuss further later). This can be evident when observing a musical scale, where the pitch of a note can be encoded in the specific structure of the pattern that is activated, with small variations according to the perceived note. The same happens with light, where the wavelength varies and is reflected in the corresponding neuronal pattern. Therefore, a physical sensation, like a gentle touch, has a structure that can increase in intensity with pressure until it becomes painful. In this sense, subjective experience is not solely mental but follows a structure based on the activity of the neuronal pattern, just like other structures, such as visual perceptions.

In this sense, we can imagine what would happen if the neuronal pattern to which a tactile sensation refers were the opposite, which would provoke a completely different experience. However, the organism would not have survived in such a case, as the structure of brain patterns configures the sensations as we experience them, and this organization is encoded in the brain. This applies to both pleasurable and painful sensations, which manifest as they do due to the organization of the brain. Additionally, this organization extends to other sensations that might not be so directly related to a structure in reality, such as tastes and smells. Despite this, these sensations also refer to the discrete and basic structure of the neuronal pattern to which they correspond, just as we distinguish red from green.

It is important to highlight that all these considerations have ethical implications, which I will address in a later section. I do not believe that the lack of "qualia" in a particular organism justifies denying its rights. My ethical approach is based on what I

call "high states of reward." As I will mention later, if an organism has the potential to experience such states in its subjective dimension, it is even more reasonable to consider that it has rights. However, the neuronal representations of such states are sufficient for this. Everything the brain is capable of doing, as I mentioned earlier, which manifests subjectively, is an expression of a high level of self-awareness and motivation, and is reflected in neuronal patterns.

The organism acts based on the activity and activation of such reward patterns over a specific period, with full awareness of their existence and the motivating role they play, which in turn has implications for its survival. I believe this level of complexity is sufficient to justify rights and respect for them, even if the justification is based solely on the activation of these patterns and the degree of this activation on a scale related to higher or lower states of reward. In this way, the system would operate independently of the subjective sensations associated with these states in a mental context, in terms of "qualia." Therefore, if we were able to build artificial intelligences motivated by similar patterns, even without knowing the possibility of a subjective dimension, I would consider that they also have rights.

To properly grasp the dimension of meaning from an epistemological perspective and unravel its implications, as well as to understand the nature of consciousness, I believe it is imperative to address the root of these phenomena through a series of concepts that I will develop in the following paragraphs. From these concepts, I will outline the epistemological framework I support, which will provide the basis from which we can formulate certain statements and criticisms of recent philosophical approaches, such as Wittgenstein's. It is important to note that, although my approach may share certain similarities with other models, it is constructed logically or intuitively from the basic principles mentioned earlier.

Let's begin with the issue that, in specific theories, mental functioning is addressed, but there is rarely reference to psychological notions in relation to brain functioning. It is reasonable to argue that any theory explaining the mind, its processes, and manifestations, such as thought, memory, imagery, and language, must start from what

happens at the brain level. The brain is the main candidate to be associated with our mind, although we recognize that explaining the mind requires more than just brain processes (see the relevant section for more on this point). Simply put, we observe that the brain, in its most basic form, is composed of one fact: specific groups of neurons activate other groups (commonly known as "connection"). Therefore, the first question to be posed in the path towards understanding our mind is: how does this process, known as "connection between neurons," relate to our thoughts, language, memory, consciousness, etc.? This is based on the premise that all mental activity has a material basis, that is, it is rooted in matter. The tendency of many psychological theories to detach from what occurs in the brain clearly indicates that they are misguided in their search for a holistic understanding, which takes into account the various levels of the phenomenon of our mind and cognition. The reality is that brain processes are what manifest, and this is where any attempt to understand the mind in its entirety must begin.

However, the crucial point is not so much the centrality of the brain as the fact, as I will explain below, of the mental association that is essential for the explanation of knowledge, the act of knowing, and meaning. The way this relationship is established with the material substrate is an aspect suggested, but it becomes evident that a material form is required for the manifestation of these properties, regardless of the precise nature of the association and its function in the brain.

Building on the previous premises, it is crucial to understand that the apprehension of something, that is, the meaning of a concept, is achieved through the existence of elements related to that concept. A term devoid of any association lacks meaning. Words themselves do not possess content; it is the relationship we establish between these words and other concepts or elements that gives them meaning. When a term refers to an object, its understanding arises from the connection with that object. The meaning of a concept lies in the factors linked to that object; this understanding materializes, for example, when we store the memory of the object in question or relate it to previously acquired concepts. Essentially, knowledge is associated with other elements in our brain, and this association is what guarantees the property of meaning. Individuals have the ability to grasp the meaning of things, and this process largely relies on the formation of associations. I would not limit this association-based functioning solely to the realm of meaning but believe it underlies numerous aspects of

human experience. This mechanism of functioning through associations leads me to reflect on its material substrate, which I will refer to later.

We can talk about using information and knowledge, but we must clarify what exactly the concept of knowledge means. In light of the previously stated propositions, it becomes evident that this question is not an insurmountable problem (like a transcendental problem); rather, it involves reaching a consensus on the criterion based on the associations between concepts and terms. The criterion I propose for defining knowledge is articulated as follows:

Knowledge does not exist as an independent entity in reality; instead, it manifests as an expression of reality in the mind of an individual who perceives elements in reality. An object in reality maintains its objective nature, that is, it exists independently; it becomes knowledge when it forms part of the mental representation of a subject. Take, for example, a chair and the term "chair." In reality, the chair is simply an objective entity, not knowledge (according to the previously stated criterion), because no entity capable of representing the chair itself turns it into an object of knowledge. In other words, the representation of the chair in the mind of a subject is not equivalent to the chair itself but constitutes the translation of the chair into an expression or system contained within the subject. Therefore, I consider that knowledge results from the translation of reality in the mind of the subject or what emerges from that translation; this involves the creation of new connections between concepts established by the subject. This definition ultimately implies an association of elements, and while other perspectives may offer different criteria, what I propose here aligns with my approach, with the association of elements being the only plausible way to conceive it.

We might hypothesize that our perceptions of elements in reality are not mere brain constructions without any connection to the external world. Apparently, there is a correlation between the mental contents that represent our world and the world itself. However, the existence of such a relationship deserves closer scrutiny. In reality, there is a similarity, at least to some extent and for certain elements, between what we perceive mentally and what we encounter in the objective world. In other words, there is a connection between both dimensions. This relationship is evident, for example, in the agreement between the shape of an object and how we perceive it through touch, which

implies a correspondence between entities in the external world and subjective experience, where there is some resemblance to the actual object.

However, it is challenging to establish a direct relationship between such disparate elements as neurons and images in the concrete world. The relationship we can postulate between reality and our perceptions is the correspondence between perception and what triggers it, that is, the relationship between neural patterns and the stimuli that presumably come from a reality external to the individual. These activated patterns generate a successful response, in evolutionary terms, that ensures their perpetuation through the survival of the organism, and we can only apprehend this response through those same patterns. Although we cannot assert this with certainty, everything seems to suggest that there is indeed an external reality to each individual that is capable of activating neural patterns in that individual, leading to what we know as perception. The limit of our knowledge lies precisely in this activation process; only from it can we infer the existence of a reality independent of us.

In a broader sense, the brain would be activated by the energy and matter present in the world, along with their properties, which would give rise to patterns of neural activation. Each pattern would correspond to an aspect of reality because it is activated by that specific aspect. This would be the nature of the relationship between the physical and the mental. However, this does not imply that what manifests at the brain level represents a faithful copy of material reality and perceived physical forces. What really happens is that there is a correspondence between our brain and the external world, in the sense that a pattern of physical objects manifests simultaneously with a specific pattern of brain activation when we perceive something, because these physical objects activate that brain pattern. Both patterns manifest in parallel. Consequently, this relationship between reality and the mental resembles a one-to-one code, where each aspect of reality is associated with a brain pattern and, thus, with a mental aspect. The patterns of brain activation are triggered by reality, as long as we accept that what triggers them is an external reality to the subject. Ultimately, perception requires the existence of something that is activated and something that performs the activation.

In the perceptual process, a specific sound is not interpreted in the brain; rather, it triggers a precise response in the form of activation of a particular neural pattern. This implies generating changes in the electrical potentials of neuron groups that are structurally configured in a specific way. At the core of this process, we find only

activation and the agent that causes this activation; there is no real processing or analysis of information in the brain. Instead, we observe a series of activations that can lead to other activations, which may be related to specific behaviors and, in turn, generate new activations.

It is important to emphasize that when I talk about a sound, as an example, and the neural pattern, I am not suggesting they are abstractly equivalent, as neurons themselves do not represent the object. In reality, the neural pattern is activated due to the interaction with energy and matter, and this is the essence of the relationship between reality and the mind. To understand this, consider the principles of the nervous system as expressed in the laws of Prägnanz in Gestalt theory (for more information on Gestalt theory, see reference 3 at the end of this document).

In addition to Gestalt theory, a brain pattern refers to a specific activation in the sensory organs in response to particular entities in reality. Translating this idea, as I mentioned earlier, does not imply that the brain extracts something from reality; rather, the brain code (the pattern) points to entities present in reality, as these entities are what activate the code. The brain's reference to reality is rooted in the very nature of the brain, which only activates in a certain way in response to certain entities. We can conceive this process as the brain code assigning a pattern in reality, as long as we consider that what causes the activation of brain patterns (in the act of perception) is related to entities in an external reality, analogous to how a musical notation designates a specific combination of sounds.

Now, what happens in the case of perceiving an aroma? How does this experience relate to reality? In this case, the perception of an aroma is limited to the idea that the sensory sensation of that aroma implies the presence of a specific substance or molecule in reality. Let's suppose that the ability to discern which substance it is in reality, based on the sensory experience, represented an adaptive advantage in biological terms. However, we must emphasize that all these inferences are anchored in the perception itself. The conclusions we draw depend on this perception and arise from the associations or connections the brain establishes from the initial activation, which implies that this activation triggers other patterns. Ultimately, this mechanism forms the basis of association, translating into the ability to make inferences or integrations, such as recognizing adaptive advantages based on the perception of stimuli.

Is there a direct connection between a substance and our perception of it? Does the sensory experience reflect what we feel or perceive in the substance or its form? Or is it possible that some associations are arbitrary, in the sense that what we perceive could simply be something different associated with the substance in specific circumstances? In other words, does a bird perceive the same aroma or taste that I perceive when interacting with the same substance? This variation can be plausible or diverse, depending on the context we refer to. Despite sharing common ancestors, interpretations can vary.

Does the green color we perceive represent a reflection of the green light spectrum? Is it an indication of something else, or simply an association formed over evolution, configuring a specific neural pattern that responds and sensitizes to the green light of the spectrum? In part, I have already addressed this issue previously. "Qualia" act as a representation of the ways elements manifest in reality. These are based on the specific activation of neural patterns that replicate certain patterns in reality. Therefore, the color green is perceived according to the presence of the green spectrum of light, due to the characteristic brain functioning of a particular organism, and the existence of certain patterns in reality.

Additionally, as I have established, the translation of perception is the activation of a specific neural pattern in response to a particular entity in reality that activates it. However, this association does not imply an intrinsic relationship in which the neural pattern takes something from reality. The pattern is activated by reality, but it does not absorb anything from it in the perceptual process. We do not incorporate elements of reality into our biology through perception; everything we perceive is the result of our biological structures, which respond and activate based on certain aspects of light. I don't see any other way to approach this process, as our biological structures are designed to respond to a specific spectrum of physical stimuli, but the overall structure does not provide intrinsic information about the physical patterns. Its function is limited to reflecting and reacting to these patterns in reality. Ultimately, biology responds to the external world, has been linked to stimuli by its own nature, and has evolved in us due to natural selection, considering the existence of a reality external to the subject.

So, in what sense can we say that what we perceive through touch, for example, refers to the object we are manipulating? On one hand, we find a biologically determined relationship that involves subjective activation in relation to the external

object. This relationship is based on the ability of our biological structures to respond to what is in the external world. However, it is important to highlight that the reference to the external lies in the activation of these structures, which do not incorporate the essence of the external into their own nature. We, as human beings, are biological structures, and in certain cases, the external is constituted by biological structures. The interaction with the external is manifested through processes of physical forces operating in reality and ultimately trigger the activation of our biological structures.

If what activates biological structures is not considered an external reality to the subject, then there must necessarily be something that acts as an activating agent. This is because I consider consciousness to be closely related to the act of knowing, and our knowledge develops through perception, which is essentially a form of activation. Activation implies the existence of something that activates and something that is activated. In this sense, consciousness cannot simply be aware of itself, as this notion would imply two components: what is aware and what possesses awareness. In the realm of consciousness, there is that of which we say we are aware and also the manifestation of consciousness itself. In later explanations, I will delve deeper into my concept of what consciousness refers to.

In the case of the act of knowing or perceiving, if what we consider as the external reality to the subject is not what triggers activation, another reality would, but ultimately, there would always be an underlying reality. This is because, for activation to occur, there must be a cause that originates it. The cause can be contained within the entity itself that is perceived as unitary and homogeneous. In this scenario, the notion of two parts would persist, where there is the cause and the effect. Consider, for example, what is characteristic of an internal state of the subject, such as their mood. This state would not be activated by something external to the subject but would be more related to the particular structure and functioning of the brain at a given moment. This manifests through a specific subjective sensation. Despite this, we still find elements that make up the experience, such as brain patterns and a cause for their activation or functioning at a given moment, or for changes in their structure, among other things. When we hold certain ideas in our mind, these can refer to sensory aspects or internal states, which, in certain cases, involve the way the brain is functioning, the activation of specific patterns, and so on.

The generation of an action potential, such as the process that allows the transmission of nerve impulses and constitutes the basis of brain function at the neuronal level, mainly depends on the opening of sodium ion channels in the neuron's axon hillock. This process is strongly influenced by physical and chemical properties, as well as the characteristics of the involved biological structures. To trigger an action potential, it is essential to surpass a specific firing threshold, achieved through the action of graded potentials that combine temporally and spatially, provided by connections with other neurons. For these neurons in question to activate, they must experience the same phenomena. For more detailed information on action potential, see reference 4 in the "References" section at the end of this book.

In this analysis, we start with a suitable level of "reductionism," focusing on the connection between groups of neurons and their activity. In this context, the term "connection" refers to the process by which one group of neurons can activate another group due to their activity, supported by a specific brain structure. This constitutes what we commonly call a "neuronal connection." In the context of perception, what happens is the activation of a specific brain pattern of neurons in response to a stimulus that activates them.

The central claim of this approach is that the brain does not process information in the conventional sense but rather activates, with its various parts activating based on different causes. Within the brain, one group of neurons that activates can, in turn, activate another group of neurons, described as a "connection" or "association." These associations manifest as changes in the electrical potentials of certain neuronal groups, giving rise to what is known as "qualia," the subjective experiences of sounds, smells, images, and other aspects of perception.

Our brain exhibits entities that, in this context, are defined as patterns of neuronal activation that refer to something. That "something" can be an object in reality, meaning a pattern activated by a stimulus, where the stimulus implies an object that exists in an external reality to the subject. When I mention "activation" or "activity," I refer to the changes in electrical potentials occurring in the brain. The things that are associated are the various patterns of neuronal activation, which can give rise to what we know as "qualia." In this way, we establish associations between the manifestations of perceptions and internal states.

It is important to keep in mind for future reflections that if what is understood as the mental, in terms of qualia (the individual's subjective experiences), is not identical to neuronal activity but refers to something distinct (as mentioned in previous paragraphs), it would be dependent on that neuronal activity. When we talk about associated things as "associated qualia," we are referring to an association of elements, meaning things that are related in a way that they manifest together. However, we cannot say that the manifestation of one "quale" itself causes the manifestation of another associated "quale." Instead, it is the neuronal activity related to one "quale" that leads to another neuronal activity related to another "quale." It is relevant to keep this distinction in mind, especially if we consider that neuronal activity is not identical to the "quale" and that the manifestation of the latter depends on other substances or elements.

If we consider that there is something unitary and continuous regarding neuronal activity, we could postulate that "qualia" is that element, at least concerning identity. In this case, neuronal activity and "qualia" would be distinct in terms of identity.

An entity could be seen as a basic association, composed of a small number of components in which something is expressed through the interaction of a few groups that activate other groups. When we talk about "associations of things," we refer to the subjective experience, the "qualia" that I will discuss further. These associations could imply a pattern of neuronal activation. It is important to highlight that I am not saying these are the same, as a pattern of activation can give rise to a "quale," but the "quale" depends on the pattern without being identical to it in terms of identity. We can also talk about a "thing" to refer to a neuronal pattern itself, which may or may not refer to a "quale." Again, it is crucial to emphasize that I am not claiming they are the same.

Later, when I mention words associated with others, images or experiences associated with a word, and how one can lead to the manifestation of another, if we consider that "qualia" and neuronal activity are not identical in terms of identity, what I mean is that the activity of neuronal patterns related to a specific "quale," such as words, images, etc., gives rise to another activity related to another "quale." In summary, a pattern manifests together with another because they are associated, as I mentioned earlier.

The way associations are formed in the brain is something we can infer, but this association, its structure, and the subjective mental representations are fundamental to understanding properties like meaning. When we think of something and that thought

has meaning, we cannot separate that something from the associations and connections it has with other things. For example, when we think of a "chair," we establish an association between the word "chair" and a mental image of a chair. If we had nothing associated with the word "chair," we would not understand its meaning, and it would be practically null in that context. However, in our mental functioning, nothing occurs without the presence of associations.

Therefore, if we did not understand the word "chair," that does not mean we would have nothing associated with it; instead, "chair" would simply be a word, perhaps with limited or even invented meaning, but we would still have an association, the idea that it refers to something specific.

At a basic level, we establish an association between a word, for example, and the corresponding object we perceive. This association implies that what we perceive refers to the world or reality of people. The meaning of things, of mental contents, is tied to the associations that exist in our brains, taking into account the subjective experience involved in what is activated in the brain during these associations. In this sense, meaning implies associations of elements, and these elements can be composed of other associations, as I mentioned earlier.

When we talk about meaning, we generally incorporate the dimension of subjective experience. If this experience is part of our conception of meaning, and if meaning refers to things associated with something, then those things should refer to "qualia," which will be addressed later. However, it is important to consider what was mentioned earlier about whether "qualia" are identical to the activity of neural patterns or not. When we talk about things associated with meaning, we are talking, first of all, about patterns of neural activity associated with each other, which, in turn, refer to a "qualia," even though they are not identical. Therefore, we could say that meaning refers to associations of "qualia" first and foremost, rather than referring to an external reality that is postulated from the "qualia." This, of course, assuming that neural activity and "qualia" are the same. If they are not, we should talk about a meaning based on neural activity first, from which we talk about an external world.

Focusing on "qualia," it is from them that we affirm the existence of an external reality to ourselves (or, as I recently mentioned, it is from specific neural activity that we manifest that we talk about a certain world and the subjective experience of various "qualia"). Reflecting on this, one could argue that "qualia" are activated by an external

reality to oneself (in this case, oneself as a subject or organism), regardless of internal activation causes, such as one's own biochemistry (considering oneself as an organism). However, if what we are refers to these "qualia" and there is a sense of identity with them, then we are the "qualia" in the sense that our identity lies in the "qualia" (see the arguments in this section). This raises the question of whether there is something that activates the "qualia" and whether we must assume the existence of an external reality to the "qualia."

One "quale" can activate another "quale," but a "quale" cannot activate itself, as that would imply that effects precede causes. Claiming that there is a circularity of "qualia" activating other "qualia" does not seem to provide a solid basis for these effects or manifestations. The fundamental issue lies in whether what activates is what we assume it to be and whether the nature of what is activated aligns with our perception. This leads us to the essential question at this point: what similarity exists between the "qualia" and the entities that activate them? "Qualia" are not the entities that activate them. On this matter, we might say that we do not have a definitive answer.

What we can assert is that the associations of elements that manifest as mental experiences are relationships of what activates the "qualia." The real and simultaneous phenomenon of the entities that activate gives rise to the real and simultaneous phenomenon of certain "qualia." This point is crucial. The question that arises is why, if what activates is not necessarily different from what we perceive as the objects existing in an external reality to the organism, we could not consider that what activates are precisely those objects as we perceive them.

The issue of why we arrive at the conclusions we generally hold and why I present the ideas in these statements relates to the following consideration: the entities that would make up the reality external to oneself, that is, what activates the "qualia," are not the "qualia" themselves. However, as mentioned earlier, there are relationships between entities in reality, in terms of their effective and simultaneous manifestation. This effective manifestation of entities translates into a specific form, a particular structure, that arises from the integration of various "qualia." This particular structure happens to be similar or identical to the form that arises from the integration of the various entities in reality, and both structures reflect each other.

Consider the analogy of a person pressing their hand into the sand on a beach. The tissue that makes up the skin is not the same as the sand, and each part of the hand is not

identical to the grains of sand. However, the shape left in the sand after pressing the hand onto it is the same as the shape of the hand itself, the shape composed of each of its parts. Similarly, in the case of the reality external to the "qualia," the resulting form of the different manifested "qualia" would be analogous to the form generated by the joint manifestation of certain entities in the reality outside of the "qualia." The manifestation of certain "qualia" would give rise, at least in part, to the form of that which activates the "qualia."

Entities in reality may have parts that do not activate "qualia," so the resulting form would not be exactly the same as the form that actually exists in reality, considering all the parts that make up an object. When we say that there are "qualia" related to perception, such as when we observe a hand, for example, following the analogy, what really exists are various "qualia" that contribute to creating a particular form, in this case, the shape of a hand with its distinct characteristics.

What is purely mental and not related to a form created by entities external to the subject is connected to what we might call the minimal units of subjective experience, the minimal "qualia" that emerge as a result of an event external to the subject. These experiences integrate to give rise to certain perceptual forms. This allows us to distinguish between what is purely mental and what is related to the form of entities external to the subject. The relationship between the mental and the external is perceived more clearly in sensory modalities such as vision, touch, or hearing. The notion of form is especially associated with these modalities.

In contrast, what is purely mental is more evident in modalities such as taste, smell, and aspects like colors in vision, where there is no replica in the form of the entity generating the "qualia" (except in relation to neural patterns, which acquire meaning in relation to the external entity when considered as a whole). This also applies to internal states, such as emotions or moods, which do not themselves reflect the form of the substances or entities that generate those "qualia."

This is why we consider ourselves as organisms, and the essence of what we are in terms of identity is related to the "qualia" (as will be explained in the following propositions of this section). Additionally, we consider that there is an external reality that we affirm we perceive. For this reason, we might think that the world of the various manifested "qualia," in a certain sense, resembles the form of the world outside the "qualia." In other words, the things we say we see or touch would be related to a world

beyond conscious experience, and the form of the manifested "qualia" would be as the form of things in the world that exists outside of conscious experience.

Regardless of which system or entities are involved in the manifestation of "qualia," the resulting form from the set of causes that gives rise to "qualia," particularly in modalities like vision, touch, or sound, should at least resemble the form of the various "qualia." This is a valid reason to assert that, from "qualia," we can conclude that reality conforms to the form we assume it has: the form of the different manifested "qualia." This supports the idea that we are organisms perceiving entities in a specific environment, that we indeed inhabit a planet orbiting a star, among other aspects of the external reality we claim to perceive.

But is this reason sufficient to support these assertions? Could there be a different explanation? Even if there were, in that case, the causes of the "qualia" would need to share, in their form, similarities with the form of the manifested "qualia." This would apply to the sensory modalities mentioned earlier, even if they were simulated entities in a complex computer. In other words, the form of these simulated entities would have to resemble the form of the various manifested "qualia." We could argue that we would not have survived as a species if the mental had no relation to reality, or at least if there was no correlation between neurons, their activity, and objects in reality. This is because the mental is not identical to the neuronal in terms of identity.

We might also consider a hypothesis in which "qualia" manifest specifically at a given moment due to changes in a part of the structure that constitutes the "qualia" itself, even in cases where there are no other external entities activating them. However, it is important to note that this part of the structure constituting the "qualia" is not identical to the "qualia" itself. This hypothesis might be unnecessary for the entire preceding argument but is not necessarily false unless there is a reason proving otherwise. The previous model remains coherent and provides an explanation of what activates "qualia" and how they emerged in terms of the organization of matter in the universe. I do not see evidence supporting another coherent model based on different notions, such as the idea that the form of "qualia" does not correspond to the form of the entities we claim to perceive in an external reality or that "qualia" are not activated by anything.

The following propositions derive from previous premises. Suppose the world does not match our perception of it, which could pose a threat to the subject. If we consider

that qualia are the result of brain activity, then we can conclude that the specific neural activity that occurs in the subject when perceiving something particular must occur consistently when that specific object is perceived, and not any other. However, this leads us to question: how is it possible that qualia, which are not objects subject to natural selection dictating how they should be formed, i.e., how we should perceive things, manifest in the way they do? That is, how do they describe particular structures that make up the world as we perceive it?

When we state that a quale is neural activity in terms of identity, it seems reasonable to conclude that changes in neural activity equate to changes in the qualia themselves. This implies that the manifestation of specific neural activity in response to particular objects in reality, which has been selected evolutionarily, must maintain a relationship in terms of particular neural connections. We are not suggesting that we see physical objects mapped in the brain, but we do claim that the relationship between our surroundings must be reflected in neural activity, in the specific connections that occur, so that certain characteristics are associated with specific colors and locations in relation to our spatial orientation (the orientation of our body in space). This would ensure that brain activity is beneficial for our survival.

If this relationship between reality and neural activity holds in the case that qualia are identified with neural activity, it would be reasonable to assume that it also holds for qualia, since these are the product of neural activity. In other words, the relationship that is maintained in neural activity, derived from our perception of reality, would also be maintained in qualia, given that these are a product of neural activity, and the relationship would persist in the same way as in the neural activity originating from reality.

The unified structure of qualia, which describes specific structures from which we claim to experience a particular world (when we identify neural activity with qualia), is influenced by natural selection.

Given the above, we can assert that a specific set of qualia does not necessarily refer to a unique pattern of neural activity of a particular nature, without which such qualia would be inaccessible. In this context, the essential point is that the relationship that exists in the external world to an individual is maintained at the level of neural activity (or at the level of the distinct entity involved in the manifestation of qualia), in terms of the connections that are established. However, beyond this, it is possible that

such qualia could refer (unless there is an inherent limitation) to distributed neural patterns in different ways, to diverse structures, or even to other electrical activity different from that generated by the human brain. This concept is more evident in experiences such as observing an object.

Regarding qualia that represent internal experiences such as pleasure, pain, taste, or color, it is more challenging to determine if different entities in the world could give rise to the same quale. Essentially, the distinctive characteristic of these qualia, rather than the form they describe, would be determined by the specific neural activity generated, rather than solely depending on maintaining certain relationships with the external reality. This could suggest that these aspects of qualia, rather than being linked to neural activity, might be related to some other substance or manifest in a different way.

Identity theories related to consciousness often state that one entity is equivalent to another, such as claiming that brain states are identical to mental states. A similar approach argues that a brain state is the same as a mental state, without positing that the former causes the latter (for a more detailed understanding of this aspect, see reference 5 in the "References" section at the end of this work). However, these theories tend to overlook the concept of identity in the deeper sense of self in this context (distinct from the "self"). The true key to identity, which I am referring to, lies in the specific equivalence I explain, as it is precisely in this identity where we can find the explanation of qualia, i.e., the subjective experience. In our brain, there may be various brain states or different neural activities related to qualia, to subjective experience, but of which we are not aware (as described in the example of split-brain patients later in this work). Therefore, it is not enough for brain states to be equivalent to mental states; there must also be a sense of identity with the cerebral that relates to the mental, i.e., we must be that (ourselves).

I am not suggesting that in the case of consciousness and subjective experience there is always an identity or a "self" that experiences these conscious states. As I will explain later, there is no such "experiencing" or "receiver" by an identity in subjective experience. Instead, the experience refers to being something, a unified entity. Although this might give the impression that an identity or "self" is experiencing something, it is actually not the case. Rather, the identity, by becoming something (which is also a unified entity), manifests a unified subjective experience. This might give the

impression that an identity or "self" is experiencing something, but in reality, it is not the case.

When I mention identity, I am not referring to the claim that brain states are equivalent to mental states, but rather to our identity in the context of the world around us. My focus on identity refers to being something, that is, being a part of the world, and it is this condition of being something that relates to subjective experience, the qualia. This implies that it always refers to ourselves or to oneself, in the sense that one is something.

Therefore, I am not exclusively advocating for a more general identity stance that simply states a "mental state" is equal to a "brain state" in the sense that one thing is the other. What I suggest is that qualia could be related to neural activity, but we must address the problem of unity concerning identity, as I will elaborate later. Qualia could be something different, like a product of neural activity, for instance (here we also need to address the problem of unity in terms of identity).

However, what I do assert is that qualia are something substantial in the world around us. Moreover, my argument goes beyond the simple question of equivalence, as I question how it is possible that subjective experience is the same as neural activity involving the movement of charges and neurotransmitters, which are distinct entities (with different charges, neurotransmitters, and activity patterns). In such a case, if they were different things, we would be talking about different things happening simultaneously, where each distinct cerebral aspect would be one part of the subjective experience. However, this cannot be the case, as subjective experience manifests as something unified, unitary, or unique, in the same way that a landscape makes sense to an observer as a unified whole, and not as a collection of individual elements. Given the conception of the brain as an atomic entity, where each element is a discrete point independent of another, there cannot be an "observer" at the cerebral level, in the conventional sense.

If there were some center in the brain that replicated the activity of each cerebral nucleus and was considered as a single entity (acting as an observer and unifier), I think it would be inefficient, as the cerebral nuclei already function as entities relating to each aspect of the experience, and the connections between them would suffice for associative activity. Therefore, we must consider another way to approach unification (I

will address this later), and ultimately, we need a unitary entity to explain conscious experience.

As I will explain in detail later, my argument is based on the idea that the manifestation of a quale for an individual depends on identifying with the brain activity (or another element that refers to the quale). As I will mention later, qualia are, essentially, neuronal activity, but in a sense of identity; that is, it is about identifying with that activity and being oneself that activity. In the absence of this identification, brain activity is perceived as what we commonly describe, that is, as the movement of charges and neurotransmitters, and such activity manifests unconsciously, regardless of whether it relates to qualia or not. Therefore, it is not enough to state that "neuronal activity is identical to subjective experience" or that "one does not cause the other, but they are the same thing," because without a sense of identity with oneself, such qualia in that equivalence remain outside the conscious realm, that is, they do not manifest as qualia for one. Thus, we must consider the act of identifying with it, that is, recognizing it as a unitary entity, as a key component.

However, not just anything from which we identify will suffice; it must be a unitary entity. This is why stating that being in a brain state is equivalent to being in a subjective mental state is not enough: who experiences that state? If neural activity does not account for something unitary, then qualia would be a product of this activity, and such activity must be a unitary entity; this is the additional key. Our identity relates to this, it is where we locate ourselves in the world, so to speak. This refers to qualia as "being something" in relation to oneself, and this explanation of qualia in this way is a logical consequence of our premises; qualia must be this.

The idea that brain activity is the basis of qualia does not exclude the possibility that certain specific activity is necessary instead of any other for qualia to manifest. Although it is true that one could argue that we can identify in a particular way with certain activity, and that this activity might not give rise to a quale, without addressing the aspect of personal identification with the activity, we cannot fully address the issue of subjective experience and qualia.

One might propose the existence of an additional mechanism at the cerebral level necessary for the manifestation of qualia, beyond the neuronal activity we already know. However, it seems there is no such mechanism giving rise to qualia, and it would even be unnecessary. Based on the neuronal activity we can observe and describe, we

can explain the functions carried out by the subject, such as perception, memory, movement, speech, decision-making, etc. Again, a quale may be a specific activity, but it is not necessary to resort to a supposed additional mechanism. We must also consider the notion of the "atomic brain" that I refer to later: what a neuronal pattern implies in terms of perceptions, memories, colors, shapes, etc., is not transmitted as such to another pattern; a pattern simply activates another, and what it implies is confined to itself.

It is possible to argue that if the quale and the neuronal activity are the same thing, they should share the same characteristics. However, we observe a difference between neuronal activity and the subjective experience of the color red. Nevertheless, by introducing the notion of "being," we can recognize an important distinction: seeing something from an external perspective is different from being that something. In the latter case, our perspective changes and we perceive things differently. If we go from observing the neuronal activity of a person who is observing an object to being that activity, the activity becomes an object we experience subjectively.

Many people have wondered how the neuronal activity related to the color red can be the same as the subjective experience of that color. To illustrate this inversely, consider the following example: when we look at our own eyes in a mirror, we say that what we see are our eyes. However, there is a difference between the perspective of the eyes and the perspective of the image they reflect. As an analogy, the image in the mirror of our eyes resembles the neuronal activity we observe when looking at another person. The image we observe from our own eyes represents the part of the qualia, that is, the subjective experience. In this example, we set aside the underlying neuronal activity of observing our eyes; I mention it simply to clarify my argument better.

When we look at our eyes in the mirror, it is akin to observing neuronal activity. This raises the question of how this activity relates to subjective experience. However, we overlook the fact that without the mirror, without that external perspective, things appear differently. In other words, we do not see our own eyes; instead, we see other things. We do not experience our own neuronal activity unless we observe it, similar to how we would observe another person through a mirror. Therefore, our perception changes depending on where we position ourselves in relation to our identity. This does not change the fact that what we see in the mirror are our eyes, whether we view it from the perspective of an eye or another person, if we are what we see.

Thus, we can speak of two distinct experiences based on the same entity. The same could apply to qualia and the entity they refer to, whether it is neuronal activity or something else, as there is an aspect of "being," of being something, beyond simply stating that one thing is identical to another. It is about identifying with that thing, positioning ourselves with a sense of identity with something.

In distinguishing between qualia as "being something," a particular entity, it is important to note that we should not confuse consciousness with integrated information. For example, the color red might be considered a quale, as a singular element, without being integrated with other things, because consciousness does not depend on the integration of information; this does not explain it. Instead, consciousness is about "being something," and being something particular (a truly unitary entity). The association with other entities only adds complexity to the conscious experience. Additionally, there are no qualia for integrated information without an identity with that information. It is also important to consider the problem of uniqueness; not all forms of integrated information can give rise to qualia. In other words, it is not so much about the nature of the substance (though this is relevant) as it is about identity. Consciousness is about being something in the first place, and that is the essential quality. What constitutes that "something" can vary, whether it is electrical discharges, certain neurons, integrated information, etc., it is a secondary matter.

Any equally integrated system that lacks qualia can still generate a wide range of responses and adaptations. The possibility of subjective experience does not seem to be an inherent advantage of an integrated information system where a distributed variety of aspects flows. Therefore, I do not find these arguments to support the question of how or why subjective experience arises.

Continuing with the previous ideas, an association at the brain level simply implies that one neuronal group activates another. In this context, the meaning of something refers to neuronal patterns that activate other patterns, giving rise to the subjective experience associated with that activity. Meaning involves associations that express certain entities, in line with the previously mentioned sense. One thing can represent a basic association, where there are few associated elements, or it can represent a large number of complex associations. The complexity of mental contents can increase as certain associations representing certain entities become part of other associations,

which in turn form a more complex entity with the associated elements. In this way, associations accumulate, increasing the complexity of cognitive functioning.

Neuronal-level association occurs because the activation of certain regions and neuronal groups happens simultaneously with the activation of other groups. Thus, the associations we have concerning an object develop as other neuronal groups activate in conjunction with the group referring to that object. This consolidation of associations happens each time a group is activated, and the activation of one group brings along the activation of other groups. In this way, the meaning of perceived objects is constructed through associations based on joint activation and consolidation, allowing a set of neuronal groups to be activated simultaneously at another time.

In terms of cognitive functions, what happens is mainly an association of elements. For example, with certain associations between elements A-B and C-D, the association A-B—C-D can be formed, creating an increasing order factor that enhances the complexity of the final structure. In other words, complex behavior, such as a complex cognitive function, originates through complex associations involving multiple connections. The meaning of these processes implies the activation of neuronal groups that relate through various associations, much like other mental processes.

The ability to understand acquired information is essential for intelligence. However, one could argue that this ability is closely linked to the skill of establishing new associations between new information and prior knowledge. Ultimately, the basis of all cognitive processes is association. Take creativity, for example. It could be considered the creation of new associations. It involves finding new ideas, but to do so, we must first work with concepts already embedded in our minds. Creativity is about establishing new relationships between these concepts, creating new associations that the individual had not previously considered. In this context, creativity is related to expressing common patterns between two concepts or perceptions. When we experience a moment of "insight" or creativity, what we generally do is perceive a connection between two elements we hadn't previously considered. This implies discovering a common pattern between the two elements, a pattern that had gone unnoticed and was not part of our conscious attention until that moment. What does this mean? It means that a greater ability to identify and understand various patterns and recognize common aspects can enhance our creativity.

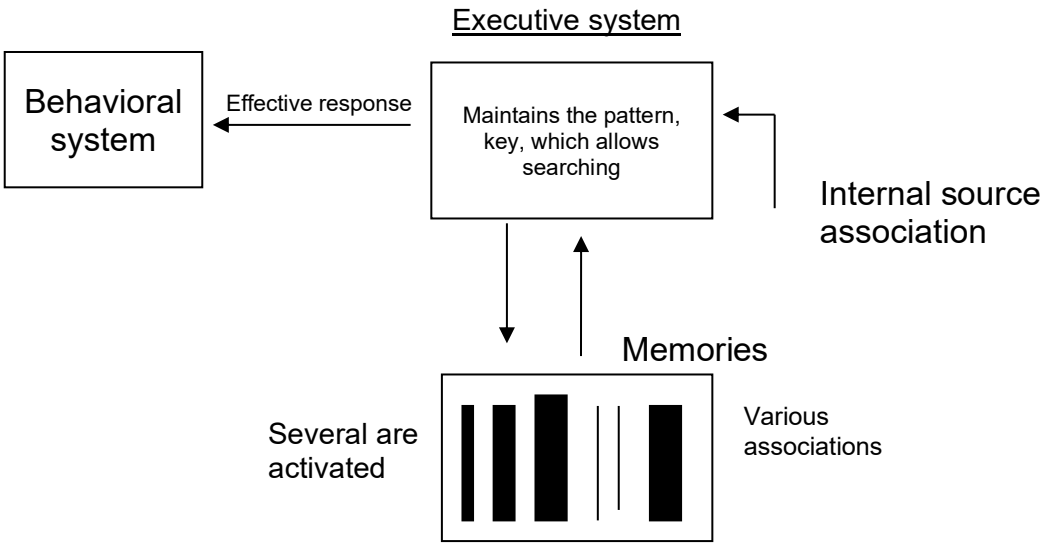
Regarding the properties of associations, due to the deterministic nature of how our brain functions, we cannot assert that there is "intentionality" (by a specific criterion of the term) in associations. In other words, associations do not originate from a "conscious intention" on the part of the subject, as associations are generated by factors beyond what we commonly refer to as "conscious intention." In fact, associations are necessary for any form of "intention" to exist in the first place. That is, what we sometimes label as "intention" or "consciousness" is not the cause of associations, as these depend on the associations themselves as a prior factor. One could argue that associations involving the subjective experience of "intention" can lead to other associations, but for "intention" to exist, associations must already be established; consequently, the experience of "intention" cannot be the cause of the associations that determine it.

In this context, common conceptions of "conscious intention" lack meaning, as the very idea of "intention" or "consciousness" as the cause of associations results from a deterministic associative process governed by cause and effect.

In many cases, mental content may be the result of "seemingly random" associations (in the sense that there is no intrinsic necessity regarding the causes driving the associations). Sometimes, our brain tries to make sense of these associations through other associations.

Often, when a thought or image leads to another, we tend to believe it has a purpose or intention, and indeed it does, but not necessarily the one we consciously think of. Instead, these images may have been encoded near each other in the neural networks, and the result may be due to an activation that, in a certain sense, appears "random." This activation could have been triggered by some environmental stimulus or a similar factor.

A scheme of functioning or behavior would be:



This represents an abstract concept. When I mention "executive system," I am referring to the function described, even though it is not the only relevant function. The framework we are presenting here represents a model of causality; that is, it pertains to entities that are caused and to processes that also depend on causes (since an effect without a cause would be impossible). This framework aims to illustrate how associations work, though it is not intended to be an entirely precise model of how functions are modulated at the brain level.

What initiates motivation or triggers the functioning of the system can be an external association, such as a perception cue, or an internal association, which is a factor triggered internally within the subject without external intervention. These factors can combine, acting as motivation. For example, reading a word whose meaning is unknown but has been previously associated can trigger the desire to recall that meaning. In this case, a cue is formed, which the executive system maintains and compares through associations, implying the activation of other associations. The comparison is made at the meaning level. In other words, there is an association between A (the word read) and B (its unknown meaning). Meaning B consists of other associations, just like A. Since B is unknown and what is intended to be determined, the activation of associations in memory must generate a pattern that reflects the A-B relationship, so that a connection is established between A-B (the unknown) and A-B whose meaning is known. In this way, the meaning of B is determined, which can lead to the generation of a response, such as the exclamation "I remember!"

There isn't an analysis in the conventional sense of the word, or you could say there isn't complex processing in that sense, but rather an activation of neural patterns leading to the activation of other neural patterns. However, it’s important to note that it's not just the activation of patterns; in brain functioning, the activity of one pattern can also inhibit or activate the activity of other patterns.

Thus, when I previously mentioned the absence of what we commonly call "intention," I’m expressing that the process occurs deterministically. What we usually refer to as "intention" or the manifestation of intentional action actually involves processes with causes and effects. This concept tends to generate confusion and can lead to fatalistic conclusions. This is because it is often assumed that the intention to perform an action must arise from the personal agency of an individual without being linked to an external cause.

However, it’s important to highlight that causes are involved. In other words, when I speak of the nonexistence of "intention," I’m referring to a specific criterion of "intention": that a behavior or thought emerges spontaneously without any underlying cause, which is essentially the concept of "intention" typically considered: the sudden emergence of a sequence of thoughts leading to an action. Nevertheless, regardless of this, an individual has the capacity and opportunity to direct their attention towards specific aspects of reality. Selective attention refers to that in which the object of attention has been discerned, reasoned, and relates to a particular motivation of the individual, where consciousness is involved.

It's important not to get confused. For an individual to perform a particular action, there must be an intention to carry out that action, meaning there must be a proper connection between the action and the factors that determine it. However, this does not mean that intention is free from determinants or lacks underlying causes. What we call "intention" is, in reality, an effect that arises from a cause. This is the sense presented in the following statements. The notion of freedom and responsibility is partly summarized as follows: the associative process in our mind is what prevails. Once we receive information, a mind where factors are associated will determine a specific response. This encompasses all existing possibilities, as the outcome will depend on the associations present in the mind.

Just as we evaluate a machine based on its functioning and the responses it generates, whether accurate or not according to our standards, we can also evaluate a

mind based on how it operates and what it produces with the information it receives or seeks. We can experience emotions related to one thing or another, regardless of the fact that both the mind and the machine operate within the framework of causality.

It could be argued that one is not responsible for their actions, but what one does is intrinsically linked to the functioning of their mind, and one is essentially their mind (considering the mind as a product of the brain). One of the causes of one's actions is precisely the functioning of their mind, and since the mind is a cause, it can be said that the mind has partial responsibility for one's actions. Ultimately, considering that one is their mind, one possesses part of the responsibility, as a cause, for what they do.

Moreover, to claim that one can avoid what they do, and not the contrary, we must consider the idea of the absence of mental functioning. Without mental functioning, we cannot reach meaningful conclusions. Nevertheless, it is possible for one to change their behavior by establishing new associations that imply different behaviors.

For those who deny individual responsibility, claiming that everything is determined by genes or the environment, it's pertinent to ask: what does the individual represent in this perspective? It seems that there is a disintegration of the person. Genetics and the environment are elements that form the essence of the person; one incorporates their environment, and genetics influence and determine numerous aspects. Additionally, there is the biology of the individual, their brain, their thought processes, their associations, and their decision-making—all of this is an integral part of the person. Integration is crucial. By separating these elements and attributing exclusive responsibility to them, we strip the individual of their identity. The person doesn't merely receive these elements; they are intrinsically these elements.

We must not forget that people have the capacity to set goals, and genetics and the environment are not everything; the associative process is also part of the individual. If even this isn't part of the individual, then what individual are we talking about? Everything an individual does is not solely reduced to genetic and environmental levels; it also involves their thinking, their associative capacity, which is inherent to the individual.

The notion of free will, as posited as the absence of causes, is not a reality. However, responsibility can exist to the extent that one is aware of the need to take responsibility for their actions and the consequences that these actions entail and to act

accordingly. Moreover, one must recognize that the functioning of their mind is a cause of what they do. Ultimately, when we refer to "one," we are referring to that mental and thinking aspect, which is the essence of oneself. Another consideration is the idea that one had no other choice, that everything is predetermined, but this does not affect the fact that one is responsible. In the sense of responsibility as a cause, one remains within causality and continues to be a causal agent. In the sense of responsibility as accepting the consequences of what one causes, it is also applicable, especially if considering that this implies greater benefits or rewards for individuals who are part of a society and coexist with each other.

On the other hand, asserting that one cannot avoid their actions implies a separation between the "self" and mental and behavioral functioning. This would leave the "self" as a static entity, unaffected by causes, which is a mistaken concept. In reality, caused mental functioning gives rise to the concept of the "self." One should rather say: "I cannot avoid being myself," and to act with "free will" in the sense of non-causality, one would have to cease being oneself, as one's identity depends on the caused functioning of their brain.

Behavior that is free in the sense of lacking causes would be merely arbitrary, meaning it wouldn't be backed by any reason or underlying cause. However, this would be illogical and inconsistent with reality. In reality, nothing arises from nothing; there is always a boundary, something real that acts as a cause. This idea was previously discussed in the first part of this work. Therefore, free will cannot be valued if conceived as action without causes, as it would lead to arbitrary actions. In fact, I do not consider it a value, as it contradicts the idea of personal agency. In a system where things operate according to causality, the system can be goal-oriented, but in a situation of total randomness, this would not be possible.

Some might argue that the absence of causes is positive. However, we must judge processes for what they are, not whether they have options or not. One can feel responsible for their actions, but we must evaluate things according to reality, and we cannot talk about "uncaused" processes and judge them based on the impossible. Brain activity is the cause of behavior and goal-directed action. When we talk about intention or desire, a more precise definition of these terms could be the relationship between a specific goal and the intensity with which it is intended to be achieved. This would be a valid criterion for intention. The formation of these intentions and desires is influenced

by causes. These aspects are products of the brain, and the very notion of the "self" or one's identity results from the active work of the brain, which is the cause of these concepts. It would be incoherent to claim that the "self" or identity is the result of a caused process and simultaneously assert that it is not subject to causes. Without a brain process of cause and effect, nothing characteristic of being human would be possible.

The individual is a causal agent, and social context and environmental factors do not act on their own but through the actions of individuals. However, the issue of responsibility pertains to how we guide and conduct ourselves; it is a matter of attitude toward our own behavior. The individual is the central element when it comes to harming another, for example, knowing that what they are doing is wrong and proceeding anyway. Whether they could have avoided it or not is irrelevant to the fact that they are capable of remedying the situation, as long as those involved and the justice system deem this important.

The notion of personal agency is an undeniable reality. The discussion revolves around our effective ability to influence events. It is often argued that our achievements do not solely depend on our actions but are influenced by random factors, like the so-called "luck," understood as a favorable circumstance to reach a goal, an advantage, or a specific opportunity. While these random elements exist, we must not fall into the fallacy of assuming that we have no capacity to influence outcomes.

Firstly, it is important to consider that under similar circumstances, some people achieve certain goals while others do not. This suggests the presence of personal factors that play a fundamental role in our achievements.

Secondly, there are individuals who may be exposed to the same "luck," but not all of them manage to capitalize on it in the same way. This highlights the importance of our actions and how well we know how to seize opportunities. "Luck" alone cannot elevate us from our current state and take us to new horizons; behind every opportunity is the action that the individual can undertake. Even if we are fortunate enough to launch a product at the right time, without having created it beforehand, that "luck" is of no value.

Thirdly, the mere possession of an opportunity, such as acquiring a piano, does not guarantee a person's ability to flawlessly perform a complex musical piece. "Luck" does not inherently grant that skill. The point being emphasized is that we have the ability to

take action, and this ability cannot be denied. Moreover, people can experience rewards based on their actions and efforts.

When someone says they cannot control a "voluntary" movement, they are actually expressing that they cannot consciously activate certain patterns associated with that movement. These patterns can be both internal and external cues that trigger a conscious experience. Take, for instance, the creative process, which involves generating ideas considered novel. During this process, the brain has a goal in mind and begins to activate neural networks in a specific way based on the structure of these networks and the brain's dynamics at that moment.

This process involves the activation of neural connections, perhaps starting with those "closest" in terms of relationships between neural patterns. The notion of "closeness" is not limited to physical space but can refer to the proximity of neural patterns in terms of similarity or the number of stages associations must go through to reach a conclusion. Through this process, various associations compatible with the initial goal are generated, aiming to find a solution to the problem posed.

It is essential that there is an associative process (which in many cases may be unconscious) that evaluates the consequences of applying these associations to the initial goal. Associations are considered "effective" if they generate a useful solution, and certain neural networks, even with low content relation, represent more original solutions from this associative perspective. To establish similarities, other neural networks may be activated whose main purpose is to represent the relationship between the initial goal and the "solution" associations. The chaining of these activations occurs due to the pre-existing structure of the networks and the brain's dynamics at that moment, where knowledge is interconnected and one activation leads to another, driven by the structure of neural connections and brain activity.

We could say that when a set of knowledge coincides or closely resembles the solution schema (though this term is imprecise, as previously mentioned), it is activated and emerges as a solution. Generally, as the association becomes more complex and encompasses multiple connections, the solution is considered more creative (although this is not a rigid rule). The evaluation process is merely the activation of patterns driven by other patterns among the activated networks and often involves multiple associations. Creativity also involves setting aside habitual associations and activating different patterns in response to familiar stimuli, generating new associations.

An analogous process can be observed in all mental functions, as they are based on associations of this nature. From my perspective, a significant part of mental functions is rooted in associations.

Our brains have the ability to set certain goals through the formation of associations between different elements, which organizes behaviors in the long term. This process can be considered as the creation of what is sometimes called a "rational code of values," which guides our actions. However, it is crucial to highlight that this process is neither "a-causal" nor independent of concrete facts. It is determined by the inherent mechanisms of associations, both internal and external, leading to complex interactions. The central issue revolves around goals and actions, as well as the possibility of carrying out actions, which is the only form of freedom possible.

Under this approach, certain concepts related to the mind, such as intention, desire, self, and evaluation, might be considered inadequate since the "self," for example, is the result of an association formation process.

It is important to emphasize the active versus passive aspect regarding associations between elements, i.e., whether an association is generated or if it is generated by something else, especially at the brain level. Given that causes are structural, there is always an active element rather than a passive one in causality. We are active subjects and participants rather than objects or receivers of events, so to speak. This does not contradict what was previously mentioned about causality at the brain level and what is understood as intention. The brain determines behavior rather than being passively determined, as there is a structure that generates and causes changes in the underlying structures. In the case of the brain, we refer to brain structures such as neurons, their connections, and support cells, among others. Although there may be an element of ontological randomness in how states change, there is an underlying structure that influences the configuration of things and generates, at least in part, a particular configuration.

This is relevant when addressing the issue of responsibility, merit, and reward, as will be discussed in the following sections of this work. In this context, when asserting that there are rewards for actions despite the existence of determination, some will argue that what one can do is really what the environment can do through them. However, this perspective is absurd. The associations that lead to an action are based on the individual’s perception of the environment and its relationship with other elements. This

pertains to the unique dimension of each individual. Even if the environment is considered to play a predominant role, the specific actions one performs depend on how one perceives and associates that environment with other experiences. Therefore, it can be said that it is what a particular individual is capable of doing.

Even in situations where the environment plays a central role, rewards are still related to what one does, as there are complex and creative actions that can be attributed to a particular individual despite similar environments, because each individual is unique as an organism. Although genetics may have an influence, it is inaccurate to say that genetics completely determines us. Each individual is a manifestation of genetics and environmental influence, and the person is an active entity that influences certain aspects of their life, given their structural nature.

A dichotomy is sometimes proposed in relation to this topic, but according to the criteria I present here, this dichotomy is not valid. Speaking of the absence of free will in a deterministic universe should not prevent the experience of reward for our actions (I will address the issue of reward and self-esteem in detail later, given its crucial role in my ethical perspective).

From my point of view, negative emotional experience, expressed as regret for past actions we would have preferred not to undertake, is often disproportionate if it is based on the belief that we could have acted differently. From the perspective of a structured and determined universe, we could not have acted otherwise; what happened developed according to the pre-existing structures of the states involved. The possibility of having acted differently should not be present as a factor that generates negative feelings.

This does not mean we don't experience a more reasonable form of regret—an emotion that reflects a negative assessment of what we did and helps condition us to avoid repeating those mistakes in similar situations. However, this understanding of determinism, which exempts us from feeling guilt or regret in the previously mentioned sense, does not prevent us from feeling reward for our actions, under the belief that we could not have acted otherwise. The reward associated with our actions is related to the system's evaluation, meaning our structure and its capabilities, regardless of whether this structure is determined or not. This aspect of the system is related to the judgment about the belief in the ability to have acted differently. Therefore, in this context, there are two independent issues that do not mutually exclude each other: one refers to the system, what it can do and is capable of doing, and the other refers to whether it is

determined or not. I argue that the reward is associated with the former, that is, with what we are capable of doing, regardless of how the system is structured.

Our understanding of the world originates from associations that ultimately refer to perceived reality, with the possibility of being influenced by internal factors of a biological nature. They also reference the individual's internal states. Our mental world, built from these associations, is based on the perception of reality and the perception of others' reality. At any given moment, our way of functioning and the activation of certain patterns are related to internal states, such as mood. All these elements intertwine in our conceptions, which ultimately refer to physical objects and the relationships between these physical objects (according to the previously formulated relationship criterion). These objects can be perceived or inferred through relationships between physical objects, such as elementary particles. Even those things that an individual manifests and that only exist in their mind, manifesting through their behavior, are considered "perceived objects." These conceptions can also refer to internal states.

Although these internal states do not imply an external reality outside oneself nor are they activated by external entities, they can be a subjective expression of how the brain functions at a given moment or how certain patterns are activated due to certain causes, rather than external entities. Even in these cases, the associations refer to a particular experience that ultimately relates to some aspect of reality, although it refers to a subjective dimension of it.

For example, consider a pattern that is activated in response to an external entity, implying an experience of perception of reality. If the biochemical structure of those patterns changes for various reasons, it can generate an internal subjective experience, an internal state of the individual. This state does not manifest due to the influence of something external in reality but arises from how that specific pattern functions when activated at a particular moment.

Let's consider certain internal states induced by the consumption of psychoactive substances. Although the activation of patterns is related to objects in reality, the way these patterns function at a given moment creates a particular experience, an internal state. This state is not linked to an external object that activates a sensory pattern.

Ultimately, our associations are based on what is perceived in reality, both in sensory terms and internal states, since tracing these associations can refer to either possibility. The associations present in our definitions ultimately refer to reality or internal states, either intrinsically or through the associations that compose these definitions. In the end, these associations point to aspects perceived in reality. For example, they indicate that associations linked to a concept involve the activation of patterns in our brain in response to externally perceived stimuli, leading to the experience of perception. In this context, the activating agent is an entity in the reality external to the subject. They also refer to the fact that the way our brain functions at a specific moment reflects a particular subjective and internal experience.

In this sense, the abstract refers to something that exists in reality, considering that what activates represents something in the external reality of the subject. This manifests in the associations that compose a concept or ultimately refers to internal states. It is important to note that the concept and its definition exist exclusively in the minds of individuals and do not have an independent existence in reality. They are part of the psychological reality of individuals and do not transcend beyond that.

It is also possible that there are associations of things that join the concept and form its definition, even if these associations do not manifest effectively in the real world. In this way, associations of things that do not have a correspondence with external reality and the definition itself, which does not have an effective manifestation in the world, represent what is limited to the mental realm and is specific to the subjects. These ideas and concepts are confined to the only reality that sustains them, which is our brains.

The concept of justice, for example, refers to certain behaviors, actions, attitudes, etc., that we deem "just." The associations linked to this term refer to reality. Similarly, the concept of "freedom" relates to behaviors, situations, contexts, etc., that we consider "free." This entire process is grounded in experience, in what manifests in the individual's reality, that is, in the subjective world of individuals. Even numbers refer to quantifications of real objects, and one could argue that this reference is the starting point for understanding them, as "one," for instance, without being associated with something, lacks meaning and is an entity without its own existence. If we traced the associations we have about things in relation to the associations that constitute those things, we would eventually find a reference to an object in reality or to internal states.

Mathematics, for instance, can refer to associations of things that do not imply relationships in reality but only make sense in the mind. However, these kinds of mathematical abstractions cannot exist independently of reality because, ultimately, abstractions relate to reality through the associations that form them. There are generations of associations in our minds related to mathematics, and we try to verify their validity within the mathematical system. These mathematical abstractions, insofar as they are generated in our minds, ultimately refer (in the associations of associations) to aspects perceived in reality.

The existence of unprovable and indeterminable axiomatic propositions within a mathematical system demonstrates the impossibility of transcending existence since we cannot go beyond our own assumptions and must rely on them for any explanation. In the case of existence, the segmentation or numerical determination of an area is meaningless if space does not exist as an independent entity.

If we consider a set, such as the set of so-called "abstract ideas," we might argue that this set is an abstract idea and therefore belongs to itself. The notion of the abstract, as something real independent of individuals, is invalid because it arises from the confusion of considering definitions as real entities (outside our mind) when it is the associations of those definitions that have real existence. The definition of a set is not a real entity in itself; instead, it is the associations that make up that definition that have real meaning. Or we could say that the abstract is confined to the limits of our minds, as it lacks existence in external reality.

When we trace the associations of a concept, we ultimately reach a point where a term arbitrarily designates a perceived object or entity in reality (except in cases of hallucinations, which are still believed to be real) or an internal state. Even in the case of abstract concepts, their basis in associations ultimately refers to something perceived in reality or internal states. The generation of associations that form an abstract concept exists only in the minds of individuals. This does not imply that it lacks existence since everything is part of existence, but it exists in our minds; otherwise, we could not talk about it.

The concept of a set implies a criterion regarding some element, which is the object to which the set refers. We couldn't talk about the set of something if we couldn't define that something, as nothing could belong to that set. Definitions are never absolute criteria in the sense of being entities that exist independently in reality. Criteria relate, as

I mentioned before, to associations of things in reality ultimately or to internal states if we trace the associations they're composed of. Depending on what we refer to, the associations can vary, but not the definition of the thing itself.

Thus, a set, or the notion of the abstract, can never be real by itself in reality; it only exists in the minds of individuals and cannot exist as an abstract notion in the Platonic sense of an idea outside of reality. In this sense, statements like "hello," "maybe," "perhaps," or "heavens!" refer to individuals' behaviors or the psychology of the subjects. The so-called abstract ideas that belong to the previous set imply associations of real objects ultimately or internal states, or even both. The notion of an abstract set does not exist in the real world, only in the world of our mind, as a generation of associations of things, but these associations ultimately refer to reality at some point, whether to the world outside the minds of individuals or to internal aspects. The reference concludes in subjective experience, either sensory (like the perception of something existing outside oneself) or internal (such as moods, for example). Since we associate the associations of things with the term "set," what is real are these associations of things.

The sense or meaning of a statement is based on the associations that the statement implies. The truth of a statement depends on the criterion of truth, that is, on the associations related to the term "truth" and the criteria related to the notions involved in the statement.

For example, if we say "some chairs have 4 legs," the truth of this statement will depend on the criterion we define for the term "chair" and our notion of truth. If we establish that a chair is an object designed for sitting and can have multiple legs, and that the truth of a proposition refers to a relationship of things existing in the external reality to the subject, then the statement will be true.

However, we can change the criterion and define a chair as an object with exactly 5 legs. This would modify the truth of the proposition since under this new criterion, objects with 4 legs would not be "chairs," even though they exist in reality. Often, in practice, we simplify our concepts and consider that an object with 4 or 5 legs is still a "chair" due to obvious similarities, even though the number of legs can be a characteristic associated with the term "chair."

The problem arises when someone tries to define a chair and establishes a criterion as absolute. For example, if we say that "chairs are made with 4 legs," this will depend on our definition of "chair." The associations of a term can be intentionally generated at any time, making them "arbitrary" in the sense that there's no inherent necessity for one set of associations to be linked to a term rather than another set. It all depends on the associations we establish and the criteria we use. The common mistake is to consider these criteria as existing absolutely, independently of the individuals who determine them.

This concept has significant implications in various aspects and is relevant for understanding discussions in the intellectual sphere. Often, discussions focus on the definition and the criteria associated with certain terms, and it's important to recognize that these criteria are human constructs and can vary depending on the context and intention of language use.

Saying, for example, "clocks measure time" depends on our definition of what we consider a "clock." The meaning of the word "clock" seems to be tied to its function of measuring time, implying that a clock is a device intended for this task. However, this definition raises questions when we consider other devices that also measure time and something else, like heartbeats. Should we call these devices "clocks"? Or, do we reserve the term "clock" exclusively for devices that measure only time?

The designation of what we consider a "clock" depends on our own associations and definitions. For example, one might measure the passage of time using a pendulum and, in that case, wouldn't call it a "clock," but a "pendulum." However, in reality, there are devices we generally call "clocks" that are used to measure time. Our understanding of what constitutes a "clock" is based on the associations of concepts we have with the terms "device" and "time." The relationship between terms and the associations of concepts is, ultimately, arbitrary.

Despite this arbitrariness, we can understand and effectively communicate our ideas because understanding is based on the association of concepts. These associations, in turn, ultimately go back to the perception of entities in reality or to subjective experience, such as moods. Our understanding is based on these associations, and there's no "void" in our comprehension; everything is connected through associations. Everything stems from how we associate concepts and perceive the world around us.

The idea that definitions depend on us and that we can establish multiple criteria for a term reflects the subjective nature of our associations. Definitions themselves are never absolute nor present in external reality; they only exist as associations of concepts in our minds. This is due to how we associate and perceive things, which gives terms their meaning in our minds.

An association of concepts can be true for a specific time and place, or by its very nature, it can be true at all times and places, like a mathematical axiom. A single possibility can be true at a given moment, and it cannot be both true and false at the same time and place. This sets boundaries on reality, telling us, for example, that it is impossible for two objects to occupy the same space at the same time. The truth of a proposition also depends on the criteria we apply to that statement, but these criteria are not absolute.

The criteria we have for terms like "chair" allow us to assess whether a statement based on that criterion is true or false. The truth of a proposition can change based on time and circumstances, demonstrating that some things can be true at one moment and not at another. This also highlights the importance of being precise in our terms and the associations of concepts linked to those terms.

Truth can be relative to a specific time, suggesting that reality has discrete, particular states that vary over time. The central issue is that the associations of concepts in our minds, related to terms, can correspond to reality, while definitions themselves only exist in our minds. The associations of concepts represent the mental images of objects we attribute to terms, as well as the uses we make of those objects and our various experiences and associations with them. These associations give meaning to terms like "chair" or "time."

The meaning of a term can be based on its association with an object in reality, but it is not limited to this single source of meaning. It can derive from multiple objects, specific situations involving objects, uses, associations with internal states, and more. Terms have meaning because they are related to various associations of concepts that ultimately (when all associations are traced) refer to external reality or internal states. Truth depends on the criteria used to evaluate it. According to another criterion of truth, axiomatic propositions or mathematical statements, like "1+1=2," do not depend on a specific time and place.

Reality, as the only existing entity, manifests through a logical structure that serves as the framework for its own nature. Any notion that does not refer to reality and its functioning lacks real existence since all internal states belong to this universe of the concrete. But what, then, does non-existence refer to? This notion is related to what is connected to reality, and any concept that arises is intrinsically linked to reality; otherwise, it would be incomprehensible. Non-existence can only be understood in contrast to existence, and thus, we always start from the basis of reality.

Take, for example, the notion of "value" in relation to an object or concept. This idea stems from value judgments and, according to conventional criteria, does not exist as an "abstract" entity in reality—that is, there is no entity called "value" existing outside the subject. What exists are behaviors based on those values, but these reside in the individual mind, even though the criteria of value may vary from person to person. These value judgments are manifestations of human brain activity.

When we say something has value for a person, this valuation is unique to that individual and does not exist as an objective entity in reality that can be directly perceived. The only objectivity that can be attributed to values is derived from a criterion. For example, if we take the criterion of survival as an end, we can objectively determine which option to follow based on that criterion. Similarly, if one defines beauty according to a characteristic X, it can be objectively assessed whether something is beautiful based on whether it possesses that characteristic.

Value and objectivity in relation to something are derived from a purpose or criterion. These purposes are not entities that exist independently in reality, like dictates of nature; they are determined by individuals. Since different individuals may have different purposes, the same objects may receive different valuations. Therefore, the value of something, like food, can be objective if a person's purpose is survival, but there is no objective purpose or value outside the subject that dictates one must live in the first place. Purposes depend on associations maintained by the subject's mind and are determined by the individual; they are not entities separate from reality.

Reality is a simple concept—it is what it is, without embellishments or additions. However, when we refer to values, according to the previously mentioned criterion, as abstract entities independent of individuals, we are crossing the boundaries of reality and existence itself. This implies that they are not truly real elements. When we say that an abstract entity does not exist independently in reality, we are indicating that it lacks

existence beyond the mind of a subject. These abstract entities involve associations and facts that exist only in the individual's mind and do not transcend to the external realm. This raises the question of whether there is anything outside the subject that triggers their perceptions.

Take, for example, an association: "there is a cup on the table." This statement represents a real possibility and is the only thing that can be considered real. However, we cannot provide absolute definitions of what constitutes a "table" or a "cup" because doing so would impose a single criterion when, in fact, we could present different criteria based on the generation or establishment of associations. The associations we connect with the terms "table" or "cup" can be real; that is, they can be linked to specific things that the term intends to represent. The association of things is the only thing we can assert as real, while the objects and their associations with the terms depend on the subject, and the definitions are not absolute.

When I say that "A is good," this is a personal appreciation that comes from me, but for another person, "B" might be considered good instead of "A." Objectivity only applies to the truth of the associations of things that a relation of reality expressed by a term implies, and this relation is established based on a criterion of truth. By setting a criterion to determine what is good, we can objectively evaluate whether something meets that criterion or not. However, it is important to highlight that the criterion itself is established by the individual and is not an absolute truth.

In our mental life, everything is represented as an association of elements. Take the example of the word "table" as a term. To understand it, in part, we associate this word with the object it represents. To understand the object "table," we incorporate various associations, such as its use, a mental image of it, or experiences related to the concept. This mental aspect is based on a network of associations, and we can determine if these associations correspond to external reality. In other words, we evaluate whether these associations have a basis in the real world.

When we attempt to define "table," we might say it is "this" and "that." However, as we delve deeper, we encounter the paradox that "this" and "that" can be defined again as "table," leading us to the cycle of "a table is a table." To avoid redundant understanding, we need to go beyond words in our minds. The real understanding of the concept "table" involves associating the word with something concrete we experience in reality: a physical table.

We can establish specific associations with the concept of "table," such as saying it has four legs, referring to a particular table. However, if we generalize and claim that "all tables have four legs," we are imposing a criterion that differs from one that might indicate there are tables with six legs. Therefore, definitions cannot be considered absolute, as they are constructed by individuals based on how our minds relate to things and concrete experiences.

It is also important to recognize that truth, in the context of the same criterion, can vary depending on time and place; it depends on specific material circumstances. For example, the truth about the number of legs a table has can change based on the material state at a given moment and in a particular place.

I can establish associations that do not necessarily correspond to objective relations in reality. Definitions, in essence, never reflect an absolute truth that exists outside the realm of individual consciousness. In other words, we cannot assert with certainty what things are in a definitive sense, but we can describe and analyze the relationships and associations that things have with each other, as well as the underlying process in these connections.

When we refer to reality or an internal state, we do so through the lens of perception, sensation, and interpretation of both internal and external elements. For example, when we say "a table is that, that which I perceive," we are establishing a relationship between a concept (a table) and our perception of that concept. In this equation, "A equals A."

However, challenges arise when we consider that what is perceived can be a memory or something absent at the moment. In such cases, how can we effectively communicate the nature of what we perceive to others? This brings into play the issue of agreement in the definition of terms, like "table." The nature of the definition can be a subjective construction, dependent on the individual who formulates it, or influenced by social factors that reflect the common perception of the world. Ultimately, true understanding emerges when there is a consensus around the definition of a concept, although this consensus is not always achievable.

This approach reflects the functioning of our mind, where definitions represent cognitive tools we use to understand the world around us. However, it is crucial to

remember that these definitions, while useful, are intrinsically limited to the sphere of our individual experiences and mental processes.

Does this imply that it is impossible to formulate precise definitions? In reality, the task of defining something absolutely is unattainable. Even in the context of understanding and linguistic communication, our definitions do not encapsulate the subjective experience of perception, which relates to certain objects and forms part of our associations. This element of experience cannot be fully conveyed through language, being exclusively experienced by the person in question.

Ultimately, our conceptions relate to objects or entities in reality that we perceive, or to subjective states that we experience internally. These links are established by following chains of associations. These connections constitute the foundation of our concepts and enable mutual understanding in communication.

If we wish to define a term like "glass," we can assert that a "glass" is a phenomenon that requires a cause to maintain its "solidity" as a concept, enabling its comprehension. However, the ultimate understanding of the concept "glass" lies in perception—that is, in an association we create with something we observe in reality. This perceptual experience transcends language and can only be pointed to, but not directly communicated.

Definitions framed within language fail to reach this fundamental level of experience. When trying to define "glass," we find ourselves caught in an apparent infinite regression, as each definition leads us to another concept that, in turn, may need defining. However, this infinite regression is only apparent, as our lexicon is limited and ultimately brings us back to previously understood concepts.

We might then ask how it is possible that concepts, which are ultimately circular, maintain their effectiveness and meaning without a solid foundation in other concepts. The reason for this is that concepts rely on associations with what is perceived in reality or with internal states. What is perceived in reality acts as a solid cause that ensures comprehension, as it does not require a prior object to be perceived, but manifests at a specific place and time, making it accessible to our perception.

Even terms like "maybe," "perhaps," or "heavens!" reflect behaviors and linguistic expressions observed in reality and refer to additional aspects of reality, namely the

intention the individual has in using these expressions in relation to what they are pointing to in the real world.

When I mention the association with something perceived in reality, I refer to the activation of specific biological structures within the individual in response to specific entities present in reality that trigger these structures. In this process, the body does not incorporate or absorb any aspect of reality, but rather activates in response to what it perceives in the environment. Perception manifests through the activation of particular neural patterns, originated by the presence of entities in reality.

These neural patterns are at the sensory level, meaning their activation arises in response to entities that exist in the external reality of the person. Moreover, these patterns can be activated in ways not directly tied to stimuli in the external reality, involving internal states. It is these neural patterns and their activation that serve as the basis for associations between things.

The meaning of a concept is constructed based on these associations between things, which ultimately refer to objects and internal states, as well as the perceptions of entities external to the individual. We possess subjective experiences of what we call the external world, as well as of our internal states. In our perception, which involves both the activation of biological structures and the functioning of these structures, we arrive at the conclusion that there are two fundamental elements that shape our experiences. These elements constitute all the evidence we have.

The first of these elements is the activation of something, which involves our biological structures, specifically the nervous system, as well as how these structures operate, influencing our internal experiences. The second element is something that triggers this activation, such as physical entities in the case of our experiences of the external world, or in the case of our internal states, a set of activation patterns that can express a specific state, even though these patterns are not directly activated by external physical entities. This internal activation could relate, for example, to biochemical changes in the brain or the activity of certain neural patterns, even though this activation can be a consequence of sensory experience.

Ultimately, we came to the conclusion that the first element (the activation of something) belongs to the second (reality). This leads us to the notion that if only the biological structure existed, it would have to be able to activate itself, which brings us

back to considering two components: something activated and something that activates, or ultimately, cause and effect. The fact that humans have survived as a species suggests that what activates is intrinsically related to the external reality. This indicates that there is an objective reality that exists beyond our individual perception.

Perception is ultimately grounded in sensory experience, both of the external reality and of our internal states. These experiences form the basis of the associations we create, as these associations refer to these core experiences. The meaning and understanding of something derive from these associations, but only the associations themselves can be communicated. Sensory experience and internal states are personal and subjective experiences that cannot be directly transmitted to others. What we can communicate are the associations we have made, and the meaning depends on these associations. We can share different associations with others, but what these associations imply in terms of sensory experiences and internal states is a personal matter, unique to each individual.

For example, when we say "the sun provides warmth," we are evoking direct associations with sensory experiences. The meanings we attribute to concepts and objects in our language, as well as the criteria and definitions we establish, are based on these associations. However, the sensory experience and internal states associated with an expression depend on each individual's personal experiences. Ultimately, when we try to express our understanding of something, we rely on the associations we share with others to evoke their own sensory experiences and resemble ours, so we can achieve a shared understanding.

The most complex aspect to understand lies in how the activation of specific patterns in the brain becomes an individual subjective experience, known as "qualia." This concept is central to the notion of consciousness, as consciousness could be simplified as the noun form of the verb "to know." However, conceptualizing consciousness has proven problematic, as it encompasses various processes, making it difficult to understand. For example, "knowing" involves the process of perception, which in turn implies the notion of activation and what is activated—concepts that are not particularly enigmatic in themselves (I will detail these issues further later).

We can create associations between things that actually occur in the world. However, generating these associations can include associating things with a term, known as designation or definition. This latter aspect does not manifest in reality; we

can only say it exists in the sense that the association of things with a term, which is "arbitrary" and dependent on the subject, manifests in the functioning of individuals, in our cognitive world. Nevertheless, a definition cannot refer to something that exists in observable reality; it is limited to what is associated with the term.

For example, an individual X might designate state A as "a cup on a table," while an individual Z might describe the same state A as "two cups on a table." The criterion for state A is therefore arbitrary and does not necessarily correspond to objective reality but rather to the subjective world of each individual. However, it is possible that there is indeed one or two cups on a table at a specific time and place, representing the association of things related to state A, and this is the only thing that can be asserted with certainty. Nonetheless, much of our communication relies on criteria and definitions.

These paragraphs also contain criteria and definitions and clarify that what is established applies exclusively to these criteria and definitions. Furthermore, they emphasize starting from what is being communicated to express something that depends on what is being communicated, which gives this approach significance, in my opinion. Philosophy can be seen, in this way, as a discipline that explores the limits, the axioms, and the consequences that derive from these limits.

It is essential to recognize that we cannot address knowledge without considering the existence of an agent performing the act of knowing, as knowledge represents the expression of reality in the subject as a result of their cognitive process. We can argue that there are different levels of understanding, which vary depending on the number of elements associated with a concept or the number of associations established. For example, if someone says the word "Wort" out loud and we do not understand its meaning, it does not mean we have no association with the word; rather, our associations are limited, resulting in a low level of understanding. However, upon receiving information that confirms "Wort" is a word and refers to the phonetic expression emitted by a person, our associations increase, initially in the perceptive domain and ultimately in relation to objective reality as well as our internal states, such as our moods.

If we are later informed that "Wort" means "word" in German, our understanding of this word undergoes a significant change, as we acquire a new association that enriches our comprehension of the term.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, in his "Philosophical Investigations," referred to certain words that do not directly correspond to objects in reality and argued that the meaning of words comes from their use. However, I argue that meaning is derived from the associations established with the word. In his work "Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus," Wittgenstein suggests that we cannot think of things apart from their relationship with others. One might consider that if subjects represent objects of reality in their minds, in a context of relational equality, considering their individual contents (as in Gestalt theory), and the nature of perception as an activation process, objects cannot be isolated in the mind from other objects. The fact is that whenever we experience what we call "meaning" and "understanding," our perception focuses on the relationships and associations we establish between elements. Meaning, therefore, manifests as a product of the interconnection of concepts, a state of affairs based on associations that emerges from a cognitive structure.

It is crucial to investigate the fact that for something that manifests as "qualia" in our mental life, there is no relation to another element. Even from the nature of perception, where we distinguish between figure and ground, we find that one thing relates to another to achieve a specific perception. Consider, for example, the expression "Heavens!". What does this expression refer to? To which object in reality does it allude? It apparently does not refer to any in particular, but in reality, it represents an association of elements. If someone uses this expression in a surprising situation, another person will understand it because they have established, through their experience, a connection between this expression and surprising moments. Thus, they will also be able to use the same expression in similar situations. However, if someone uses the same expression as a greeting, we will not understand what is happening, especially if it is done in a low voice and without a surprised facial expression. This is because we have not previously associated the verbal expression with such a situation, and the lack of correspondence with a facial and bodily expression complicates understanding even further. Beyond the use, it is the association of elements we have created that gives meaning to expressions and our behaviors, since the use of a word implies an association of elements by individuals.

As I mentioned earlier, knowledge and meaning do not exist as such in reality. If an alien being were to have a manuscript created by a human and managed to understand it according to the author's intention, this would imply that they could establish a

relationship between the signs of the manuscript and the associations of elements in their own mind that match the associations the author had in their mind. We cannot claim that things have intrinsic meaning in reality; instead, all meaning resides in the minds of individuals as a result of the association of elements. Thus, those who assert that certain numbers have specific meanings are mistaken, as all meaning exists in the minds of subjects as a product of the association of elements, not in reality. This is because definitions or criteria are established through associations that, in a sense, are arbitrary, in that there is no intrinsic need for one association over another to represent the terms denoting objects in the association.

What about π? The symbol π, defined as the ratio between the circumference of a circle and its diameter in the context of Euclidean geometry, involves a criterion that determines the use of that symbol. This criterion is essentially arbitrary, as we could equally express it as "Y is the ratio between the circumference of a circle and its diameter." However, the association of concepts linked to π is a representation of the numerical ratio between the circumference of a circle and its diameter, which we call π. But does π possess meaning in itself? No, because its numerical value equals the ratio between the circumference of a circle and its diameter. The meaning of π lies in the association of concepts we create in our minds, which leads to the understanding of π. However, this constitutes an expression of concepts, not an intrinsic meaning; meaning is an exclusive construction of our mind. In terms of signification, numbers, like words, are a way of representing elements of reality and expressing them in a language. However, like words, numbers are not reality itself but a code, in which a symbol is associated with something in reality and refers to it. This is similar to how a group of neurons in our brain refers to an aspect of reality but is not identical to reality itself. The pattern refers to an aspect of reality, while the symbolic code of numbers designates reality, though it is not reality itself. Nevertheless, both dimensions express the same: objects and their relationships in reality, as well as the code that represents them.

The process of association in the mind of the individual is what gives meaning to concepts by linking entities together, ultimately based on what is perceived in reality or in internal states. If someone exclaims "fire!", understanding that word depends on the context, as we have created specific associations for that expression based on the situation and what is perceived. "Fire!" can mean a blaze if we are in an enclosed space in a building, or it can be an order directed at a soldier to shoot. So, is it the use that

gives meaning to the word? But how do we know what its use is? All understanding of use involves a learning process, and all learning is based on the association of concepts. Therefore, it is precisely this association of elements (the conjunction of concepts) that gives meaning to the expression. In summary, if knowledge is based on the associations of concepts in our mind, then the association of concepts generated from other associations that our brain can produce constitutes the foundation of knowledge.

Regarding the statement "there is no absolute truth outside of mathematics," the question arises of how this can be affirmed as a truth and not just another assertion. The proposition itself seems to lack sense, as its content includes the proposition itself, negating it: since it does not refer to mathematics, it cannot express an absolute truth. Therefore, it could be the case that there are no absolute truths in mathematics, but that such truths exist outside of this field. The notion that there is no absolute truth outside of mathematics is self-contradictory and thus lacks validity.

According to logical empiricism, meaningful propositions refer either to empirical propositions, which can be empirically verified, or they are analytic, referring to logic and mathematics (see reference 6 in the "References" section at the end of this work for more information). However, this very notion, this proposition about meaningful propositions, seems to be itself a meaningless proposition. Nevertheless, I propose that a proposition lacks meaning (in terms of significance) if we cannot associate the terms of the proposition with something that establishes a relationship between them. In other words, a proposition only gains value to the extent that the terms composing the proposition have meaning by being associated with other things. A proposition that describes something, like the one mentioned above, has a limit: the associations of concepts related to the proposition and its terms are what sustain the sense, the meaning of the proposition, and ultimately its understanding. This implies a limit, which is reality; the limit is that which is ultimately perceived. The associations of elements can represent a relationship that is a reality or not, be valid or not, in terms of whether they refer to relationships between elements in reality. If "only" the empirical and the analytical have meaning, which ultimately implies an object, and this refers to reality, and as it refers to reality, it implies possible validity, truth, or falsity, depending on whether the relationship in reality exists or not, then if it is "only" in these aspects, the association denies its own possibility, as it does not represent the postulate itself, because "only" the other would have meaning. This generates a contradiction, and the

nature of reality, which constitutes the standard of truth and validity, excludes this possibility.

While it is true that the empirical and the analytical have meaning, they are not the only aspects that encompass these, nor the postulate itself that the empirical and the analytical have meaning. It is not "only" the empirical and the analytical. Something else encompasses these elements and the very postulate about the empirical and the analytical having meaning. The sense of something implies its meaning, and the meaning of something requires it to be associated with other elements. Associations ultimately imply a limit, whether in something perceived in reality or in an internal state. The reference of associations to a relationship in reality implies the validity, truth, or falsity of that something according to this criterion. The sense is sustained by the associations of concepts; associations imply meaning and validity, and sense comes from this form. Associations are what underpin the proposition. The aforementioned postulate represents the process of knowledge. Postulates reflect the epistemological action of the knowing subject; the proposition "knows" describes, in some way, this process.

One could argue that there are absolute truths outside the realm of mathematics, from my perspective, because the logic present in mathematics also manifests in the real world. Thus, propositions make sense only in relation to the connections between elements, the associations of concepts to which the terms of the proposition refer, the relationships between these elements, and the associations that the proposition itself can generate. All these aspects are ultimately based on reality, both external reality and the internal states of the subject.

I am not asserting that only what is perceived by the senses, for example, is valid without integration into associations of concepts, nor that mental associations are exclusively valid without the basis provided by the senses, since without sensory information we could not form those associations. My argument focuses on the fact that it is the associations of concepts, which imply the expression of the sensory or internal states and their respective relationships, that give meaning to a statement or postulate.

When it is argued that "only the empirical and the analytical have meaning and can be true," some argue that this statement can have meaning and be true if it is supported by reasoning based on what is observed in reality and on associations that justify why "only the empirical and analytical have meaning." However, according to my previous

argument, it is not exclusively the empirical and analytical that have meaning, as it is the associations of concepts that give meaning to everything, including the empirical and analytical. This implies that a statement that denies the validity of associations, including itself, cannot be valid, as this constitutes a contradiction.

Many thinkers have claimed that "we cannot know things or the truth," but a statement that denies its own validity, like this one, self-negates and ultimately cannot be considered valid. We can, at best, say that certain aspects of reality are unknowable, but to make such a statement, we must rely on a part of reality that is knowable and that supports that claim. Otherwise, the statement lacks foundation.

If we assert that "all propositions are false," we come to the conclusion that since this is a proposition, it is also false. This illustrates that the sense of a statement, as something that is not contradictory, lies in the associations of concepts, avoiding contradiction when they are included.

Ultimately, knowledge is possible up to certain limits, truth is knowable, and meaningful propositions must reflect possible states of affairs. The main critique of Wittgenstein's philosophy is that some of his statements, as presented in his work "Tractatus," do not represent meaningful propositions, and therefore, cannot be true or false. This raises questions about the sense of his own statements and their coherence within the philosophical system he proposes.

What gives sense to propositions are the associations of concepts. First, what we call sense depends on these associations, and the central criterion here is that of meaning. However, understanding meaning itself also requires associations, as the comprehension of something is based on associations of concepts and, therefore, on associated concepts that involve what is perceived in reality or internal states. Only through these associations can understanding and the meaning of propositions be achieved.

The truth or falsity of propositions also derives from associations of concepts, as to comprehend the notion of truth or falsity, we must have certain concepts associated with the terms "truth" or "falsity." These associations lead us to a level related to reality, which implies something perceived, for example, and therefore, refers to the realm of reality.

I have previously argued that truth is comparable to existence, to what is real and logical. However, I have also stated that all propositions are existent, in the sense that they exist at least in the minds of individuals as associations. The distinction lies in whether the propositions refer to relationships in reality, according to the relationship criterion I established in the introduction. In this context, truth is based on the criterion that the associations of concepts in the proposition express a relationship in reality, as long as the terms of the proposition refer, at some point, to associations with perceived objects, for example.

Our point indeed contrasts with Wittgenstein's perspective in "Philosophical Investigations," where he emphasizes the role of the use of words in determining meaning. Here, it is proposed that meaning is primary, and it, in turn, allows us to understand other notions such as truth or validity. Meaning relates to the associations of concepts and is not limited to the use of words, although usage can be one element associated with a term. Meaning is a central factor that refers to associations of concepts, encompassing not only word usage but also images, sounds, internal sensations, and other elements (see reference 2 in the “References” section at the end of this work).

The notion of word usage requires, first and foremost, the existence of associations to understand it. The use of a word is built from associations of concepts in an individual's mind, and it is these associations that enable the understanding of concepts such as use, meaning, and validity.

In the context of the later Wittgenstein, it is argued that a word and its meaning do not establish a direct correspondence with an object in reality; rather, the meaning is derived from the use that is given to it. For instance, when the word "fire" is used to indicate the shooting of weapons, what is at play are associations. "Fire" is used as a substitute for "shoot," and "shoot" is associated with the action of pulling the trigger, representing a relationship in reality (see reference 2 in the “References” section at the end of this work).

The meaning of "fire" is based on the things associated with this word, and "shoot" is one of those associations. Someone may have decided to use "fire" because there is a combustion or fire when guns are shot, called "fire." This use does not seem random, as it has a logical connection with the process.

However, it is important to highlight that words retain meaning not solely due to their usage but because of the things associated with them. Usage arises from what is associated with the word—its meaning—and not the other way around, as one might interpret. The use of a word depends on the associations that are already linked to it, and then, through learning, it becomes associated with a particular situation. The use of a word is just one of the elements contributing to the term's meaning, but it is not the only one.

In this way, the use of a word is determined by what the word is associated with in a particular context, and if we have never made that association in a specific context, the use of the word in that context might seem meaningless. The use of a word is merely a manifestation of the associations of concepts, and it is the things associated with the word that represent its meaning. The word is associated with something in a context, and this usage is based on the word's prior associations. For Wittgenstein, the meaning of a word presupposes its use, whereas from this perspective, it is the use of a word that presupposes its meaning, as the prior associations provide the meaning before the word is used in a specific context.

On the other hand, a proposition considered meaningless is not necessarily devoid of sense in its entirety; in reality, there can be various interpretations or associations related to that proposition. The sense of a proposition becomes quantitative to the extent that it represents a number of possible associations with something. When we formulate an idea or express a proposition, we face the complexity of discerning the multiple connections between concepts.

From my perspective, truth is based on the ability of conceptual associations to reflect relationships in reality, even if they are initially linked to other subjective experiences or entities considered aspects of reality. These subjective entities, known as "qualia," can range from external sensory perceptions to internal states like emotions.

In this regard, I disagree with Wittgenstein's conception of truth and meaning. In my approach, conceptual associations play a central role in the definition and understanding of a word, including its use in a specific context. The use and context of a word depend on multiple possible associations, all contributing to its meaning.

It is important to highlight that, although all propositions exist in a subject's mind as a result of conceptual associations, there is a criterion for evaluating whether these

associations reflect relationships of objects in reality, as established in the introduction. A definition, for example, resides in the mind of the subject but does not necessarily represent a relationship between objects in the external world, except through the associations it implies. When I state that "a glass is a container for holding liquids," I am presenting a criterion for defining what constitutes a glass. However, this criterion is relative and may vary depending on the perspective. The truth or falsehood of such a statement depends on the criterion used; it can be true in one context and false in another if the associations of the word "glass" do not correspond with relationships in reality involving physical objects.

Ultimately, the meaning of words is derived from the multiple conceptual associations they imply. These associations are based on sensory experiences, subjective experiences, or internal states, such as moods, but they are not entirely communicable since they are personal and subjective experiences. Additionally, it is crucial to recognize that the associations I mention, related to the idea that a definition exists in the minds of subjects and not necessarily in reality, refer to concepts that are considered feasible to be true or false. These propositions are not devoid of meaning or possible validity, as it is the conceptual connections that allow for these notions.

Following the logic of the Tractatus, a proposition stating "The world is the totality of facts, not of things" would be considered meaningless, as it does not seem to refer to a possible state of affairs, according to the author's own notions (see reference 1 in the "References" section at the end of this work). However, in line with my approach regarding the dependency of propositions on conceptual associations, the question of whether a proposition has meaning or not becomes relative to how we define meaning and what associations accompany the term in question. Similarly, the validity of what is associated with the meaning of a proposition depends on our interpretation of what is valid and what associations are linked to that term.

Propositions carry associations," and this statement, in turn, constitutes a blend of conceptual elements. Therefore, it does not result in a contradiction to assert something that refutes itself, since everything we express is based on conceptual connections. The arguments I have outlined, related to the notion of sense as meaning, how this manifests through associations referencing something perceptible in reality or internal states, and truth according to associations that propose relationships in reality and existence in the

minds of subjects, represent aspects that align with what is actually the case—that is, they exist.

When we apply this to the previously mentioned proposition, defining the world as the totality of facts constitutes a criterion associated with the term "world." The truth or falsehood, from my perspective, does not refer to the criterion itself, but rather to the associations surrounding it. The question that arises is: what do we mean by "facts"? If "facts" refer to aspects that are consistent with reality, in the sense that they refer to connections in perceptible reality, then the association of "world" points to something tangible outside the subject's mind. If the associations related to "facts" express something that does not correspond with reality, then it would not be considered true according to that criterion.

Sense, in its quality of meaning, originates in associations involving something perceptible in reality or internal states (although it is relevant to remember that both categories are associated with qualia or corresponding brain states in mental or cerebral terms). However, the way we unite these associations related to perceptible reality, for example, might not reflect relationships in reality, and therefore not represent the truth according to that criterion of truth.

Many of the propositions in the Tractatus aim to establish criteria about the nature of something based on conceptual associations. However, the problem lies in the fact that its criterion of meaning does not encompass the propositions of the Tractatus itself, which creates a contradiction. Additionally, the Tractatus's approach is based on a different metaphysics than the one I propose in these propositions, namely that the world is reality and reality is equivalent to existence. Nonetheless, this approach encounters its limits since we can only understand the notion of reality and existence through associations with what we perceive, such as through observing things. We cannot transcend reality to define it independently, as reality represents an unavoidable boundary. Consequently, all definitions would incorporate the notion of reality.

If Wittgenstein's interpretation regarding what gives sense to a proposition—namely, a state of affairs or an empirical fact, meaning a proposition that describes a situation of tangible facts—were addressed, this idea could extend to propositions about propositions, that is, those referring to specific elements in the functioning of our language. From this perspective, the Tractatus could make sense without falling into contradictions. In other words, it would be necessary to reconsider what states of affairs

refer to and broaden this notion to include the propositions of the Tractatus itself. However, it seems that Wittgenstein's description is more restricted and limited in its scope. If we assume that the propositions about what has meaning, according to the Tractatus, conflict with the propositions of the Tractatus itself, meaning they actually deny their own sense, then a new parameter would be required to give sense to things.

To avoid contradictions, the nature of what gives sense to a proposition must also manifest in the proposition that establishes what gives sense to a proposition. If a proposition defines what gives sense to a proposition, but this element does not encompass the proposition itself that tries to confer sense, then a contradiction arises. Under such discrepancy, there can be no assertion of validity or truth for the Tractatus, especially if we consider the Tractatus's own approach to truth, which partly depends on a correspondence with possible facts and is therefore linked to a classical conception of truth, though restricted to the most concrete and empirical. If the propositions of the Tractatus do not refer to something along those lines, then they cannot be considered true.

If it is argued that this does not constitute a problem, it would allow for talking about anything under that criterion, even what the Tractatus itself advises not to address. Following the criterion I have adopted about truth, where I consider that the propositions of the Tractatus make sense because sense, to me, relates to conceptual associations, I do not consider the main tenets of the Tractatus to be true. From my perspective, sense refers to a different set of concepts, allowing us to discuss ethics, aesthetics, metaphysics, and other matters, and to make true statements in these areas.

Moreover, even if it were argued from the standpoint of states of affairs that the propositions of the Tractatus make sense, I would maintain that, rather than referring to a state of affairs, these propositions refer to "qualia" or conceptual associations that reside in the brain and give rise to the perception that the propositions refer to tangible objects in reality. Ultimately, conceptual associations are related to this more than to anything else. Meaning originates from these associations, and understanding depends on the established conceptual connections. In this sense, my approach diverges from Wittgenstein's thought.

I would agree that a proposition can refer to something true if it refers to something in reality, but only if we expand our conception of reality to include our internal world of sensations, behaviors, ethics, aesthetics, etc. From my perspective, all these aspects

are real in an empirical sense, as they are associated with criteria existing in the minds of subjects and form part of what we call the "world."

Let us consider the following premises: A proposition implies the conjunction of concepts. Everything I communicate involves the amalgamation of concepts. What gives sense to a proposition are the concepts related to it, and this particular proposition has concepts related to it, which avoids any contradiction.

In light of this, when we pose questions like "What is matter?" the only available answer lies in the concepts associated with "matter" that we possess or can formulate from the term "matter." Our understanding of the notion of matter arises from our observation of reality and the connections between concepts that we are capable of perceiving. The answer, meaning, and understanding are rooted in these conceptual connections. There is no answer that transcends our understanding, an answer that exists beyond the conceptual connections we maintain about matter, as these constitute the only possible apprehension.

Similarly, when I say, for example, "this painting is beautiful," I am not necessarily making a meaningless statement. We can analyze the conceptual connections I have with these terms. At some point, these connections refer to something real, even though the quality of "beauty" itself does not inherently manifest; this designation expresses something about the world, particularly about my psychological world, which exists. This proposition is communicating something about my subjective experience, about my inner world; it has meaning because it represents an attraction I experience towards an object, for instance.

Another option would be to establish a criterion for what we consider beautiful and assert that A and B together constitute beauty according to my criterion. A and B could represent characteristics of physical objects, and if I follow the criterion that what is valid is the association of concepts that reflect a relationship of elements in reality, and if indeed A and B are related in reality, according to the criterion I previously established, then I can assert that the association of "beauty" is true: what is associated with "beautiful" is true. However, it is important to note that the criterion itself is not a reality in the external reality but a mental construction, a notion that only exists in the subject's mind and can be modified by another criterion. We cannot express through language the subjective experience we have with the term "beauty"; we can only designate it, as this experience transcends language. However, this does not imply that

expressions about "beauty" are meaningless simply because the quality "beauty" as we conceive it does not exist independently in reality. The criterion is not a reality in reality but is maintained in the subject's mind. In other words, what one considers beautiful depends on their perspective, their assignment to the term, and the connections they establish with it. The criterion does not directly refer to something that can be perceived in reality, but this does not mean that what is related to the term cannot be true. As I mentioned before, I can assert that A and B together represent what is beautiful to me. A and B could be characteristics of physical objects, and if these properties manifest in a perceived object, I can assert that it is beautiful according to this criterion.

It is also possible to formulate a proposition about morals or ethics. It is not suggested that the ethical lacks meaning; in fact, it is feasible to objectively determine whether something in reality conforms to a certain ethical criterion, established through associations. The mistake would be to project this criterion directly into reality and claim that it exists independently of the subject who maintains it through associations.

Similarly, when discussing "the best," we can use such a concept meaningfully. Objectively, the criterion of "the best" does not inherently exist; that is, this criterion of superiority is only applicable to a particular individual and lacks validity outside of that context. Moreover, this notion might depend on associations that include psychological states that do not have an independent existence in objective reality. What we define as "the best" is an association that originates in the mind of a subject, but it does not constitute an intrinsic relationship in reality. Therefore, I can assert that something is superior or inferior effectively, but only in relation to the criterion I have established as the standard of excellence. This criterion resides exclusively in the mind of the individual. Consequently, I can argue that, between two alternatives A and B, A is superior based on a certain criterion that prescribes that "the best" must possess characteristics X and Z, with A possessing such characteristics, unlike B, which justifies the assertion that A is superior according to that criterion.

The associative capacity of the mind plays a fundamental role in the validation of knowledge. This is because the associations between concepts relate to the connections that exist in reality, which constitutes a valid criterion. However, it is important to highlight that the associative capacity acts as a limit, as it allows for the validation of knowledge but cannot be validated by itself. This is because any attempt to validate it

would need to use the same associative capacity that it intends to validate, creating an endless cycle.

This argument applies in various contexts, often to highlight the limitations of systems or approaches to thought, such as science. However, we cannot conclude that the validation of knowledge is necessarily flawed due to the impossibility of validating the associative capacity. The reason lies in the very nature of validation. Validation, according to our associative capacity, involves determining whether an association of concepts in our mind reflects a relationship between objects in reality, and this process establishes a fundamental limit. In other words, the question of whether we can validate validation itself is meaningless, as our notion of validation is intrinsically linked to the use of the associative capacity.

The question of whether truth is reality exemplifies this absurdity. To question whether reality is, in itself, true is absurd because it is from our conception of reality that we derive the notion of truth, and we cannot escape this circularity. Similarly, asking whether the associative capacity truly exists is meaningless, as we would not be able to offer any answer if it did not exist.

The determination of the truth of the propositions presented here depends on the criterion of truth that each individual establishes. If we define the truth of these propositions as the correspondence of what the propositions represent, through conceptual associations, with relations that exist in reality, then they would be true according to that criterion.

In a different context, human behaviors originate from conceptual associations. Consider, for example, conditioning or reinforcement that influence the formation of specific behaviors. We often categorize our decisions into two types: logical or rational (always depending on how we define "rational" in a particular context, and here, the notion of decision primarily refers to action, with "rational" in a logical sense) and illogical or irrational. However, it is frequently argued that there is no fundamental separation between these two categories, as the influence of emotions seems to be present in all decisions, regardless of their nature.

This argument is based on the idea that no motivation arises in a purely logical manner or can be completely separated from emotions. We should understand this as a

self-evident assertion; that is, logic is not the underlying cause of how things work but rather the manifestation of how processes develop in reality.

Following this line of thought, we might consider that if we completely eliminated all emotions, feelings, or instinctive impulses, there would be no motivation to act or behave in any specific way. As a result, all actions would be essentially arbitrary, guided solely by the immediate external context, for example.

It seems that logic itself does not drive behavior; instead, we might use reason as the expression of logic in things to guide behaviors that are emotionally or instinctively motivated (this could be considered a criterion of "reason"). However, this approach is not accurate. Behaviors we often call "irrational" are actually logical manifestations, even if they don't necessarily derive from the structural logic of reality. When we say that reason fails and behavior we deem "irrational" in the sense of "illogical" occurs, we are not making an incorrect statement. Nothing in reality can be truly "illogical"; otherwise, it simply wouldn't exist. Behaviors may be based on premises that make sense and have a purpose, but if the outcome is not as expected, it is labeled as "irrational" in the sense of illogical. However, this is not the case; the cause of the behavior simply differs from what was expected. The cause of a behavior considered "rational" is based on different conceptual associations. Thus, the labels "irrational" or "rational" refer to the underlying causes of an action, but ultimately, we are referring to the causes. These terms are useful for communication, but apparently should not be used to describe behaviors themselves, but rather to explain the underlying causes.

To determine whether a behavior can be considered rational or irrational, it is crucial to have a clear definition of what we mean by rational and irrational, and how they differ from logical and illogical. However, it is important to question whether behaviors are truly motivated by emotions, regardless of how we label them (whether as rational or irrational).

Behaviors usually have a cause or motive that drives them, establishing a goal or purpose for the action. However, it is also possible for an action to have a cause but not necessarily a final purpose, leading to seemingly arbitrary behavior. An example of this could be the behavior associated with a depressive state, which could stem from the state itself, without a clear purpose.

Within the causes with specific purposes, the notion of rationality can be included, but we should not dismiss the notion of caused or determined behavior. There have been various arguments about whether actions or behaviors are exclusively determined by emotions and instincts, if reason (in its different meanings) also plays a role, or if reason alone can guide our behavior, depending on how we define "reason."

Let's assume that actions mostly depend on emotions and instincts. In this case, one might conclude that all ethical behavior has its roots in emotions or instinctual drives. Any behavior not motivated in this way could be considered arbitrary, lacking a defined purpose.

However, this assumption heavily depends on the philosophical and ethical perspective one adopts. Some philosophers argue that ethics can be based on reason and rational principles, claiming that emotion is not the sole foundation of morality. Ultimately, the question of whether ethical behaviors derive from emotions or can be based on reason is a topic of debate in moral and ethical philosophy, with no definitive consensus.

Logic, in its structure, lacks any intentionality regarding goals or purposes. Its function is solely to express and reference the structure of reality, as well as emotions and instinctual drives. If reality or logic had intention, it would imply that they express the cause of a behavior, such as an action or conduct, by an organism, like a human being. In other words, it would imply that reality or logic is imbued with a purpose that guides actions.

Our thinking relates to a logical structure shared with reality. In reality, there are interactions and relationships between objects that we can approach through thought. However, it is argued that the manifestation of behavior originates in the constitution of instinctual drives and emotions, as well as in the interaction of matter itself, which allows the existence of the subject. Without these underlying structures, our existence would be impossible. Essentially, we are the result of a structure that persists over time.

The expression of a specific behavior derives from previous constituent elements. If these prior elements were excluded, the only thing left would be a response stimulated by the environment, known as a stimulus-response. In a context where given A, B occurs, with B being a survival-oriented behavior, A could be considered as the end goal of survival, thus establishing the objective of survival. However, it is crucial to

highlight that this relationship is logical in its expression but does not imply that A can necessarily be inferred as a purpose or goal in reality, independent of the subject who may choose to follow it or not. Ultimately, logic merely expresses relationships and connections but does not attribute intentionality to reality itself.

In my view, reality can be understood as something inherently logical. This is because what has been previously discussed follows a logical structure. However, it is important to note that A does not necessarily derive from logic. In other words, in the absence of A, A does not directly emanate from logic, since the entities that make up what we call reality do not have an ultimate cause in the sense of having a defined purpose (as mentioned in the earlier sections of this work).

What I am arguing here is that an individual's motivation to act, their goal, cannot be deduced from what is logical. Since I consider the structure of reality to be logical, the lack of an ultimate "why" for acting in a specific way is evident in reality. Furthermore, there is no ultimate "why" that is directly perceptible in reality, nor is there an entity independent of the individual that provides a purpose (as discussed in the initial sections of this work).

Therefore, behavior cannot be considered logical in the sense of being intrinsically rooted in reality. We lack premises in reality that necessarily determine behavior that we could call logical. Instead, behavior can be rational to the extent that it is based on the individual's choice, who establishes their own purpose and acts accordingly, using their knowledge to achieve that goal.

A typical valid reasoning might be: "If I want to survive, I must get food. I want to survive, therefore I must get food." The conclusion is logical in the sense that it follows a modus ponens structure, but the goal of survival is not ultimately derived from reality. Instead, it is determined by what the subject defines as their goal, which may be based on their values and desires. All this is influenced by the associative capacity of the individual's mind. The goal is not an intrinsic dictate of reality at its deepest level. A rational individual, by a certain criterion, would consider these factors in their behavior, although they may also act simply in response to a deep need to survive, without an explicit consideration of values or purposes in their mind.

On the other hand, it is imperative to emphasize that it is not acceptable to conceive of the thought process in an illogical manner, understanding this notion as the ability to

reach conclusions devoid of fundamental premises. In this sense, it is pertinent to mention that Ludwig Wittgenstein held a similar stance on this issue. Wittgenstein argued that a proposition might lack meaning, but this does not necessarily imply that thought is inherently illogical (for a more detailed exposition, refer to reference 1 in the "References" section at the end of this paper).

From my perspective, rather than labeling a proposition as meaningless, it would be more appropriate to argue that a proposition assumed as a conclusion does not constitute a coherent manifestation of the corresponding sequence of premises. This is significantly different from the manifestation of the illogical, such as asserting that effects precede causes, a statement that is indeed possible. In summary, human thought cannot be illogical. When a conclusion is presented, the underlying premises are present either consciously or unconsciously. Otherwise, what we have is not a conclusion derived from reasoning or a sequence of premises. When discussing the rules of logic or the validity of reasoning, it would be more appropriate to refer to the necessity of maintaining a pre-established logical sequence, to distinguish it from what is considered illogical, as emphasized in the initial propositions of this essay.

It is fundamental to recognize that reasoning, whether it leads to conclusions that align with the premises or not, is feasible and is a common manifestation in human intellectual activity. In this context, it is valid to distinguish between logical conclusions and those that lack logic in relation to these reasonings. In reasoning where the conclusion does not relate to the sequence of premises, the conclusion is considered illogical. However, it is crucial to highlight that illogicality refers to the conclusion itself, that is, the proposition or statement that is intended to be expressed as a result of the sequence of certain premises we are working with, and not to the statement itself when outside the context of the reasoning. It is important to understand that the statement itself may refer to feasible and real situations in other contexts.

When referring to an illogical conclusion, it indicates that a statement, which is supposed to derive from a sequence of premises we are working with, cannot be coherently deduced from those premises based on the premises themselves and the logical sequence they follow. For a statement to be accepted as a conclusion, additional reasons or causes are required to support it. On the other hand, conclusions can also be considered logical when they align with the sequence of premises that support the reasoning.

It is important to note that statements related to illogical conclusions do not question the truthfulness of the premises themselves; instead, they focus on the incompatibility between what is concluded and what the premises and their sequence indicate. That is, what is considered illogical is not necessarily impossible in terms of reality if the premise is evaluated in isolation. Conversely, statements about logical conclusions emphasize their coherence with reality, as these conclusions appropriately fit the premises and the logical sequence. However, it is important to recognize that even what is logical in this sense may not be possible in reality.

Regarding the premises, they can be classified as logical or illogical, possible or impossible, depending on their correspondence with reality. It is important to highlight that it is possible to have both logical and illogical conclusions, even when the premises refer to logical or illogical concepts.

When the terms "rational" and "irrational" are used in this context, they refer to congruence with reality. Rationality refers to the ability to establish coherent relationships between concepts. There is a spectrum ranging from low rationality to high rationality, and it is argued that low rationality more frequently leads to what is commonly considered irrational. In the context of irrationality, it mainly refers to generating illogical consequences, creating incorrect sequences of statements, as previously mentioned.

Logic, as a discipline, is dedicated to studying sequences of propositions and establishes various postulates about which conclusions are considered illogical and which are logical, as well as the reasons that justify such classifications.

When we say "it is logical to behave for survival," it is necessary to analyze this statement in light of the previously mentioned points. This statement can be interpreted as a conclusion that coherently follows the sequence of its premises, which justifies the term "logical." This implies that the notion of "behaving for survival is logical" refers to the conclusion derived from certain premises.

When we say "behaving to survive is possible," we are referring to the idea that this action is feasible and can occur in reality, which relates to the notion of the logical as what is possible and real. In this sense, "behaving to survive" would be considered logical.

However, if we state something like "behaving to survive is the logical thing to do," using "the logical" in the sense of the only possible action, we must consider that it is possible to behave contrary to survival. Therefore, it would not be appropriate to label this as the logical thing.

All this has significant implications for my argument concerning ethics and what is considered ethical or moral. Although thought has been used for malevolent purposes, beliefs that lack foundation, that is, the subjective constructions of individuals, have occasionally been responsible for some of the greatest crimes against people, although this is not the sole cause. However, it is not appropriate to claim that something logical, apart from our emotions, instincts, and, most importantly, certain ideas, has been the driving force behind such acts.

It is crucial not to confuse our expressions, which represent manifestations of our emotions and judgments regarding things, with reality itself. For example, when we say "my behavior is irrational" or "this behavior makes no sense," we are not referring to the behavior itself as intrinsically illogical. Rather, we are indicating that this behavior has other causes and originates in different associations of concepts, in which our emotions, among other factors, are involved.

If we consider achieving a specific objective, such as well-being, and are presented with various alternatives to achieve it, labeled from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least efficient option and 5 being the most effective, and there are no arguments against any particular choice, we might opt for alternative 5 as a means to achieve the mentioned objective. From this perspective, one could argue that we are using our associative faculty, which is the criterion of reason that I propose. Reason here is understood as the ability we have to establish connections between elements, both from the external reality and our experienced internal states. However, it is important to emphasize that well-being cannot be deduced from logic, as opposed to reason.

However, a fundamental question arises: why would we prefer option 5 over option 1? While option 5 is more effective, can we derive its choice from reason (understood as logic)? From my perspective, it is not possible for an intention or action to derive from logic or reason (used as a synonym for logic) since these do not imply intentions. An intention that originated in logic would have to be evident, necessary, and a priori knowledge. However, in this case, the inclination towards one option or another is not evident. Moreover, neither logic nor reality contains purposes or criteria, and the choice

between options is not based on this but, according to many, is based on emotions, sometimes referred to as passions. Indeed, everything seems to boil down to the ultimate criterion that guides the human being, which is reward (my own criterion). The individual follows what rewards them in some way, and all other criteria that follow originate and have their limits in this principle.

The notion of reason, understood as the ability to establish connections based on reality and internal states, is the perspective I adopt, and this allows us to choose option 5. The cause of this choice lies in the objective, that is, well-being, and the way we wish to achieve it. The crucial question is what determines both the objective and the method to achieve it. According to my criterion, both the objective and the means to achieve it are determined by our associative capacity, that is, reason. The values an individual possesses arise from their associative capacity, as these values imply the objective, and they originate from the interaction of our thoughts and our emotions and feelings, as well as the association with states of reward, in my view.

It is plausible to argue that behaviors driven by emotions may not solely result from those emotions themselves. An action may occur concurrently with the experience of an emotion, but the underlying cause could involve a broader context encompassing both the action and the emotion. Some individuals contend that emotions driving behavior can arise as a response to the environment, as seen in the fight-or-flight reaction. Emotions can also be related to a specific neurochemical configuration that is not necessarily linked to the environment, as occurs with mood states.

Ultimately, the reasons or causes of our goals cannot derive from a purpose in reality, as such a purpose does not inherently exist in reality itself, nor can it refer to an abstract principle independent of the individual's mind. These purposes are generated by the individual's mind and not discovered; someone must have originated them at some point. If we were to discover these purposes in others, and given that they do not exist independently in reality, someone must have generated them initially. Values hold significance only for individuals; reality lacks value according to certain criteria of value. Our morality, therefore, cannot transcend our actions based on goals or purposes, as we would eventually reach the uncaused. Reality is amoral; purposes do not ultimately exist within it, but they determine our actions, even if emotions guide an individual's behavior. The limit must be considered as it is, and we cannot attribute a cause beyond this, as such a cause would not exist.

Regarding emotion-driven behavior, it is plausible that random foundations exist, triggered by factors reflecting a particular orientation in the individual's life. Consequently, objective morality, or more precisely, coherent morality, cannot solely rely on these foundations or on purposes considered absolute but must consider other factors. There is no logical necessity, determined by logic itself, dictating the choice of option 5, as things are expressed logically. The reason behind this choice lies in the nature of the person, who ultimately follows what rewards them, according to my criterion, which constitutes the ultimate criterion in the individual's choice and action.

Therefore, there is no intrinsic need in logic for, say, compassion in humans to be institutionalized politically, nor is there a need for a substance to be banned simply because science indicates it may be harmful to the individual. Knowledge and reality are expressed logically, but ultimately, they do not contain a purpose in themselves; these purposes belong to the realm of human nature, and our actions are based on what rewards us, not on ends that exist independently of individuals, which ultimately do not exist. Reality does not harbor purposes at an ultimate level; there is a limit, as mentioned earlier. Nonetheless, it is common for people to justify their goals by appealing to these nonexistent entities.

What, then, is "reason"? The notion of "reason" from my perspective is intrinsically related to the thought process, specifically to the formation of associations between ideas and concepts. It is important to note that this interpretation may differ from others. In my approach, I would distinguish between "rationality" and the concept of "rational" or "irrational." Rationality refers to the ability to establish associations of ideas. A greater or lesser development of rationality implies a greater or lesser degree of mental associations.

In contrast, what I consider "irrational" is linked to thought or action that lacks a basis in reality, based on false beliefs, superstitions, and the like. This involves a reduced level of mental associations, indicating less developed rationality. Therefore, the "rational" is characterized by being based on reality, that is, on concrete and observable facts, while the "irrational" involves accepting as true relationships that do not exist in reality.

It is important to recognize that the process of using reason and forming associations can lead to erroneous interpretations of reality. One can use their associative capacity and arrive at associations perceived as objective, reflecting

relationships in reality, when they actually do not. Consequently, one can be mistaken in applying reason and guide their actions according to notions that lack a basis in reality. This is a possibility.

It is essential to understand that the ultimate cause of our actions and purposes, not existing in reality as concrete entities, is sustained through mental associations in the minds of individuals. What is associated with a purpose can be both real (a relationship between objects that exists in the world) and unreal, but the purpose itself is defined by the individual. From this perspective, we cannot deny rationality, as that would be equivalent to denying thought itself, which depends on the formation of associations between ideas.

The fundamental criterion underlying our actions is the pursuit of reward, which aligns with our intrinsic nature. Associations of ideas are an integral part of this nature and affect what we do. However, it is crucial to emphasize that the primary motivation for our actions lies in the reward associated with the mental connections we establish. Although the associations of ideas and the use of our associative faculty play a fundamental role in our actions, it is the reward linked to those associations that constitutes the central motivation of our behavior.

It is valid to say that to advance toward states of high reward, it is necessary to develop rationality and embrace the rational. This capacity for reasoning is essential for achieving greater accomplishments, creating, and so on. Underdeveloped thought, with a limited number of associations, combined with a predominantly irrational attitude, does not lead us to states of high reward. In fact, it could lead us toward long-term degradation. In this sense, emotions and passions are not isolated elements, and it is crucial to recognize that reward is the fundamental criterion underlying our actions.

Today, we face the consequences of an era of superficial reasoning that does not allow certain relationships glimpsed in our conscious experience to be adequately integrated. These relationships can give rise to emotional responses, of which we are aware, but we often dismiss these emotions in favor of other criteria. This is not the traditional conflict between reason and passion or emotion, and I am not proposing that we should yield to our emotions. Instead, it is essential to understand that these emotions are related to certain aspects, and it could happen that we have precise but unconscious connections about certain matters, which are not fully integrated into our conscious experience, while the emotions derived from those connections are perceived.

Investigating the reason behind our emotions can lead to valuable "discoveries," so to speak.

However, it is important to avoid falling into extremes, a common tendency in many conceptual formulations. Some argue that emotions are crucial sources of information, while others claim that thoughts, ideas, and concepts detached from emotions provide accurate information. The truth is not necessarily found in one extreme or the other. Both emotions and thoughts can be deceptive, no matter how certain they seem. Truth is an elusive concept and often requires time to unravel. Let us not forget that we are fallible beings. The key point lies in the effectiveness and integration of both dimensions in our everyday experience. Time plays a fundamental role, as discovering the truth demands time, patience, and meticulous observation of circumstances.

Undoubtedly, it is essential to consider our emotions in the decision-making process, recognizing that feeling something is right does not guarantee its validity. There must be an integration of our emotions with the rest of our thoughts and associations to make informed decisions. Often, great ideas arise from associations that, at some point, become incorporated into our conscious experience. These associations may have been present all along, but our attention was focused on other elements. Clearly observing our body's reactions and shifting our attention from the usual to accommodate novel associations are components of a deep associative faculty. This allows us to consider all aspects of our reality that are susceptible to being perceived, which in turn enables us to grow in self-esteem and happiness, as well as to develop our capacity to create and enjoy.

In this context, reason acts as a boundary. We cannot predetermine the way we think or decide it in advance, as thought simply manifests as it is. Reason, in my view, does not replicate reality in an "internal void" in our mind. Instead, through thought, we do not take what is outside in reality and materially replicate it in our mind. Rather, we consider a reality. For example, perceiving the color red involves experiencing a certain sensation based on something that activates it, implying a supposed reality external to the subject. The propositions we generate in relation to reality are not necessarily reality itself, as they may establish things that are not true in reality, according to the arguments I have presented.

Through the use of thought and reason, in my opinion, we can determine, through propositions, what type of light frequency is discernible by the human eye as the color red, as well as its numerical value. This understanding of the nature of the color red, related to our subjective experience of "red," has been established through thought and reason, by forming associations of concepts that involve knowledge. The instruments that enable this knowledge about the nature of light were also created through thought and reason. Ultimately, reason plays a crucial and essential role in our understanding of reality. While our knowledge may not be infallible, this does not mean we should discard reason and turn to knowledge based on faith or intuition, which supposedly would be more certain in some matters. That is not the case. If we cannot know something in itself through the use of thought and reason, faith or intuition will not allow us to know it with greater certainty, as these do not involve the consideration of evidence and argumentation. Faith in something is simply believing in it for certain reasons, but not necessarily reasons based on evidence and logic. Intuition is often just as prone to errors as other presumptions we have about things.

It is true that many people hold their beliefs firmly for reasons that go beyond evidence and reasoning, and often, these beliefs are based on deep faith. Discussing the truthfulness of such beliefs with individuals who hold these notions can be a challenging task, as logic, reason, and facts often cannot persuade those who have faith in their beliefs. This difficulty is even more pronounced when two people have faith-based beliefs that are incompatible. In such cases, discussion and debate are usually unproductive, and these individuals can become dangerous when they believe their beliefs must be imposed by force, as no argument can change their point of view.

Another criticism of reason arises on an ethical or moral level, arguing that reason cannot serve as a guide for actions, especially when it comes to determining the ends we pursue. According to this perspective, the ends we seek do not follow a rational thought process that establishes a course of action among various possible purposes. In this sense, we could say that reason determines certain ends, but not all. Reason, understood as the associative capacity that allows us to determine which ends to follow based on certain criteria, also considers the ends behind these.

However, there is a point where reason cannot determine the ultimate end of our actions, as this ultimate end represents a limit in the process. Reason cannot determine the ultimate end because, at that point, there are no criteria through which reason can

determine it. The ultimate end, which could be considered the ultimate cause rather than the final purpose (see subsequent discussions), is a limit in itself, and at this point, reason can no longer guide. Nonetheless, reason remains crucial for dealing with reality and achieving our goals, as long as these are related to reality. Reason allows us to understand and address reality, and as our actions relate to reality, we need reason, the use of thought, to effectively reach the ultimate ends and the subsequent goals that can be determined by reason based on the criterion of the ultimate cause.

It is important to highlight that emotions do not exist as separate entities in reality; they only exist in our thought, which relates to reality. Reason, as an associative capacity, is necessary for dealing with emotions, as it allows us to understand and manage the relationships between things in reality that give rise to those emotions. Our emotions are shaped by natural selection in response to events in reality. However, the primary role of reason lies in its ability to address reality and establish relationships, though these relationships may or may not correspond with objective relationships in reality.

In my view, rational human behavior is that which is derived from the use of reason, while the irrational originates from the disuse of reason. It is possible to make mistakes when employing reason and acting based on associations that do not correspond with reality, that is, ideas that have been incorrectly attributed to real relationships between things. However, with irrational behavior, there is no attempt to identify the objectivity of these associations; rather, one acts based on them without a reflective process or deeper mental work. Therefore, the term "disuse" may not be entirely accurate; in reality, it involves a reduced level of associative mental work.

Under this approach to irrationality, when one acts based on something they recognize is not in their best interest, instead of being simply irrational, it could be said that one is following a path that does not lead to a higher state of reward. One pursues a reward that, for instance, does not benefit oneself in the long term.

Moreover, the distinction between rational and irrational behavior can be based on whether an action is supported by existing objective relationships in reality or by falsehoods. The ultimate reason, the ultimate cause, simply is, in terms of the causes that determine it; these causes are ultimately inherent. Such a concept of rationality and irrationality applies to behavior. In any case, the ultimate cause is an entity that exists in the mind of the individual, and therefore, behavior is justified by something that is

anchored in reality, at least in the sense of being real in the individual's mind. The ultimate reason is identifiable, and one can be aware of it. This is necessary for determining personal goals.

The crucial issue is the identification of the ultimate reason, the ultimate cause, rather than simply "choosing" it. The reason for this choice is that there is no criterion that allows for the choice, as the ultimate cause, representing a limit, is not subject to criteria of choice. The ultimate cause must express itself through the nature of reality and the life of the individual. This ultimate cause becomes the criterion for the other choices of the human being, making it the ultimate criterion, the limit, because otherwise, infinite criteria without a sustainable foundation would be generated.

I have identified the ultimate reason in individuals as the reward, which manifests at different levels, where various ideas and experiences converge and associate. The ultimate reason, in this context, is understood as the determining factor without a higher guiding criterion, but it has its roots in the nature of our biological structure. When a person acts solely by following their sensory impulses, they are promoting their survival but are not truly identifying what motivates them. In this scenario, the action lacks reasoning, associative capacity, and the underlying conceptual connections.

There are underlying reasons that direct our behavior towards specific goals, and the determination of those reasons depends on the application of the faculty of reason. If we do not exercise this faculty, we act blindly, and what we pursue may not be the most appropriate for us, according to certain criteria. At the deepest level, causes simply exist, and again, it is reason that identifies this aspect.

So, if we consider the state of reward that originates in our mind as the ultimate cause of our actions, we must turn to reason to understand this notion. The "reward" is a concept that involves a series of associations that ultimately refer to some aspect of reality, even if this reality is subjective (within our mind). However, the question arises as to why we choose to live based on this reward in the first place. At this level, we cannot use reason to "choose." In other words, thought and associations do not provide additional criteria to support this choice over others, as we are guided by our own intrinsic nature.

Upon reaching an ultimate state, the ultimate cause, rational decision-making becomes feasible when there is an objective criterion. If an objective X is sought and the

achievement of that objective X is pursued, it is possible to objectively select option A over B because option A enables the achievement of X. In this process, our associative capacity plays a crucial role in determining this choice.

However, at this point, there are no criteria "beyond" the ultimate reason. There must necessarily be a limit; otherwise, subsequent goals would lack a foundation, a cause that justifies their existence. We could refer to this limit as the "ultimate end." Nevertheless, regarding our actions, we would not speak of an "ultimate end," but rather of an "ultimate cause," as I will clarify later.

Therefore, asking why we should pursue the reward and seeking a rational solution is ineffective in this context. Moreover, there is no "why" at this point, in the sense of an ultimate purpose, as it would be seeking a purpose in a reality that ultimately lacks such a purpose, and there are no criteria that reason can employ to determine it. There is no "why" as a purpose guiding this quest, as the end, which would actually be the ultimate cause rather than an end, is not defined by criteria beyond that reason or cause. This ultimate cause must, for example, be rooted in the biological nature of the human being.

Let's suppose that the state of reward originates from certain neural connections in the brain, and much of our functioning is based on mental associations (putting aside the factors that influence the formation of such associations, as I mentioned earlier). However, I want to clarify that when establishing the criterion of associative capacity in relation to determining which ends to pursue, under this notion, we cannot claim that reason determines the ultimate cause. The individual does not pursue the reward with the aim of achieving another end; rather, the pursuit of reward is inherent to the individual's functioning, a manifestation of their biological structure. We could compare it to a person riding a bicycle, where their journey and the way they move are derived from the nature of the bicycle and the act of pedaling, and all the paths chosen are a result of these factors. However, this way of functioning and the nature itself are not chosen for any reason beyond these elements. Therefore, the ultimate cause is the reward, which underlies concepts like self-esteem and happiness. We perform actions motivated by the reward they entail, that is, the states of reward associated with certain stimuli.

We could define reward as that which drives a specific action (excluding automatic actions or reflexes) of an individual at a given moment, as well as that which reinforces said action in subsequent moments, functioning as a feedback system. Reward can take

various forms, such as a pleasant sensation, well-being, tranquility, relaxation, enthusiasm, or a certain degree of excitement, among others. Although its manifestation may be moderate, its capacity to motivate and guide behavior can be significant. Reward is not necessarily limited to euphoric states; sometimes, it manifests mildly and can even intermingle with feelings of tension or dissatisfaction. However, this tension dissipates when experiencing reward for the action taken, as the underlying motivation is also a form of reward that is already present, even in tense situations. Sometimes it can be difficult to distinguish between different states of reward, but we still carry out actions motivated by something that, in some way, drives us to do so, and this motivation manifests before taking action.

Occasionally, when something we are emotionally attached to is threatened, we experience a sense of threat that can induce fear. However, at the same time, we experience a feeling of attachment to that something, which manifests in various ways, and defending it can generate a sense of well-being, although this response can vary depending on the case. This suggests that there is a sort of reward associated with our attachment and the defense of it. Otherwise, it would lack importance, and we would not feel motivated to protect it. The state of reward arises both from the attachment itself and from the action of defending it. In some cases, the reward may be barely perceptible at the moment, but we are certain of its presence. We perceive a certain activation, perhaps a dose of enthusiasm, and we expect feedback to materialize; at some level, the reward is intrinsically involved in the motivation of the action.

When we refer to "ends," we are projecting into the future. Ends are reasons or causes that are already present in the subject and determine their action, but they include an element of fulfillment. This means that the ends previously conceived can be realized at a future moment. For example, if someone is stranded on a deserted island with the goal of getting out of that situation, which acts as the cause of their actions, this end is fulfilled when they manage to survive and return to civilization.

However, what I have described as the "ultimate reason," that is, the reward, lacks this element of fulfillment. The reward is an ultimate cause, and what can be fulfilled in this context is feedback, which we can call "feedback reward" to differentiate it from the reward that already motivates the action. For instance, one can experience an increase in the level of reward, but the ultimate reason for the action is already present

and is not fulfilled; instead, it persists, increases, or decreases its association with a particular action if this feedback does not occur.

It is important to highlight that the reward is not equivalent to the idea of winning a championship, which is an idea present before the actions are taken and is fulfilled if the championship is won. The reward, as a motivator, is already present before we undertake the action, and we do not act based on something that does not yet exist; instead, we act based on something that is already present, that is, the reward that manifests before the action. This prior reward does not necessarily have to be intense or high, unlike the feedback we sometimes get from performing an action. We must distinguish between this type of reward, the feedback reward, and other forms of reward, such as the one experienced in the long term that influences our usual mood, for example. The prior reward is present before more intense states of reward. In summary, "ends" are reasons that can be fulfilled or not, while the reward, as the ultimate cause, is not in itself an end according to this criterion.

Reward indeed drives an action, and feedback can further intensify or strengthen this action, consolidating it in the long term and promoting its repetition. However, it is crucial to highlight that a reward experienced after an action would not be sufficient to initially motivate that action. In reality, what drives the action is a reward that is already present before the feedback. In other words, the reward is at play from the beginning, motivating the action, and the subsequent feedback can influence the likelihood of the action being repeated in the future. The reward is the underlying cause that drives our actions; it is not something that materializes in the future but is already present and plays a motivating role from the start. What happens after the action is the feedback, which determines whether the action continues or diminishes based on the prior reward.

When people express their desire to become doctors, architects, writers, etc., it is not that they are acting for a reward that will manifest after reaching that goal. They already experience a state of reward associated with being a doctor, architect, or writer, and this reward is what drives and guides the actions necessary to achieve that goal. What happens as they work toward the goal is a feedback process, where the action continues if more reward is generated by the actions undertaken. If there is no increase in the reward associated with those actions, the motivation to continue may diminish.

The activation of the subject can be considered a state of reward that, in some cases, can be equated to a type of feedback.

It is important to note that when I assert that reward, as the ultimate criterion for actions, does not fulfill in the same way as ends or goals, this does not mean that people do not have goals or desires, such as the pursuit of self-esteem or happiness, which we refer to as "higher states of reward" later on. However, what motivates progress toward those specific states and goals is the reward already present in the individual, which acts as the ultimate reason, the final criterion, and the underlying driver of actions.

Ultimately, when I assert that reward is the ultimate criterion, the ultimate reason behind our actions and preferences, I mean that there is no longer an absolute purpose, such as survival, that dictates our actions. This means we do not act for rewards to achieve a specific goal, like acting for rewards to ensure survival.

Some people might argue that we perform actions to guarantee life and survival, which would imply that we act for rewards to secure our existence. However, this perspective overlooks that many of our actions can also lead to self-destruction. In reality, we are motivated by rewards, and while it’s true that many rewarding actions can contribute to our survival, life is a secondary result of the pursuit of rewards, not the ultimate criterion. Reward is the ultimate reason in the sense that there is no other criterion by which we perform actions or prefer something. We can think of it as a boundary structure, with various states, interacting with other boundary structures, but beyond the reward, there is no other motive, cause, or criterion that explains or determines the existence of that boundary structure.

Rewards are triggered by certain ideas and associations, but this does not mean that at the level of idea connections or neural patterns and their activity, there is another motive, cause, or criterion explaining why we act for rewards. In reality, we act for rewards because that is human nature; this is the structure it presents in this sense and at this level, and it is the ultimate criterion or reason behind our actions.

Moreover, it is important to note that acting for rewards is already pre-configured, preceding the idea of carrying out a specific action that may arise at some point and trigger the reward.

The state of reward involves a complex biochemical dynamic and structure that manifests in various ways, such as a pleasant mood, a feeling of joy, euphoria, tranquility, and tension release, among others. These states of reward can motivate various actions. Additionally, high states of reward, such as those associated with self-

esteem and happiness, are characterized by being long-lasting and rooted in our well-being biochemistry. However, over time, these states can diminish, requiring the individual to seek new goals and challenges to maintain or surpass the level of reward experienced.

In this context, let’s consider the notion of "satisfaction." Satisfaction can be understood as a state where the reward exceeds the initial level that drove the action and the level of reward manifested during the action. At the same time, what originally motivated the action no longer generates the same reward or ceases to generate a reward, possibly due to the reward feedback that, at some level, reduces the capacity to generate reward associated with that action or other stimuli. This could be related to biochemical factors at the brain level, among others. Various situations can arise over time, such as a decrease in the capacity to generate reward, generating the same amount of reward, a temporary increase in reward, or even the possibility of generating suffering. These changes can occur at different times and contexts, and their explanation might involve different biochemical factors at the brain level.

Sometimes, certain reward feedbacks can motivate us to undertake actions with greater enthusiasm because these feedbacks activate the reward that specifically drives those actions, rather than generating a reward associated with general relaxation or well-being, which temporarily reduces the reward associated with other activities that drive behavior. This exemplifies how our actions are motivated by reward, and in these cases, suffering generally does not play a significant role.

When analyzing our experience, it seems that the basis of what we do, at least regarding our actions outside of reflexes and automatic and instinctive behaviors, is related to a state of reward. There does not seem to be any ultimate reason that motivates the actions we carry out in daily life beyond the experience of reward. Considering that our unified entity and the action we perform are essentially the same—meaning the feeling of reward and the action itself are inseparable—we could assert that we do what we do because of the reward, and not because there is a reason that leads to the reward and, in turn, to the behavior, as if the experience were a product of that reason. If we consider that our entity is a result of certain brain causes and that these causes give rise to our actions, then we could say that we carry out our actions because of the reward associated with those brain causes at the level of experience. In brain terms, we do what we do because of its relationship with brain patterns that are

associated with reward, meaning the causes of the reward. These brain causes can be related to intense, lasting, or fleeting rewards, but ultimately, these brain causes are the underlying motives of our actions. To simplify language, from this point on, I will simply refer to "reward" as the cause of our actions, although we could say that we do things because of the brain causes specifically related to the reward. Instead of saying we seek reward, we could assert that an action is carried out to the extent that it is associated with brain causes related to reward, and these causes drive behavior, while the feedback obtained consolidates those behaviors.

At this level of analysis, we do not find reasons in the sense of criteria that justify the choice, determination, or execution of actions among different alternatives. Reward stands as the ultimate cause for action, and this is a consequence of underlying causes, particularly the biological structure of the human being and its way of functioning. We seek reward because it is consistent with the functioning of our biological structure. In summary, rationality arises from individual goals, as ultimately, there is no ultimate purpose in reality, and the individual's goals emerge in a concatenated, associated, or determined sequence, leading to the ultimate reason, which is a result of what is intrinsic to the biological structure of the human being and its functioning.

The pursuit of reward is intrinsic to our biological nature and the way we function. We cannot question why humans prefer reward over its absence, as there are no other criteria or motivations beyond reward that determine this choice. We act this way because it is inherent to our nature and how our biological structure manifests and operates. The notion of preference itself is tied to the notion of reward and depends on it. We prefer one option over another due to the level of reward each provides. The standard of preference and what we prefer are based on the degree of reward they offer. When reward itself is at stake, it cannot be the object of preference; instead, we seek it because it is the very expression of how our biological structure functions. Even if we considered another factor as the ultimate limit or criterion for rational choices, independent of reward, the limit would still exist, and there would be no criteria for its choice, as all rational choices depend on this criterion. It would simply be the expression of certain causes in reality, the consequence of the same. Regardless, I argue that reward is always present. For us, the ultimate cause of our actions is reward, as it is fundamental to our existence.

Regarding the role of emotions in our behavior, we can distinguish between emotions that arise in response to perceived events in reality and moods that may result from our brain's biology, with or without the influence of perceived reality. I believe that emotions and feelings are triggered in response to associations of ideas and specific experiences in reality. For example, our emotions are influenced by how we interpret events and think about them. If what we feel depends on how we perceive and understand things—that is, on our interpretations and associations of ideas—then certain events in reality will be linked to particular emotions and feelings, and the perception of these events will trigger those emotions and feelings.

We make decisions rationally, that is, based on observable facts, verifiable experiences, and testable evidence, with the aim of performing specific actions according to determined criteria. Ultimately, the fundamental cause of our choices can be identified as the pursuit of rewards. Although we experience emotions like disgust, fear, or awe, these emotions have underlying roots and causes that are part of an individual's judgment, who evaluates their circumstances and acts accordingly, guided by the ultimate desire to obtain a reward. This ultimate motivation, the reward, is the fundamental criterion that guides our actions.

For example, sometimes we perform automatic actions, like startling in the face of danger, but even in those cases, the emotion is triggered as a preparation for action and is intrinsically related to what we perceive and our previous associations between perceptions and emotions. While in situations of fear, the behavioral response may be quick and automatic, in situations requiring more deliberation and time, the behavior is driven by the pursuit of a reward. It is important to note that emotion or feeling cannot be separated from the associations we have with certain facts or stimuli.

Our thinking reflects a logical structure that attempts to capture the underlying logic of reality, as suggested by Wittgenstein (see reference 1 at the end of this essay for additional information). However, it is crucial to understand that action is not automatically deduced from this logical structure of reality; logic is merely a form, not the content.

Our emotions toward different objects or situations arise from the associations we have established with them and are activated based on how we perceive those associations. People can experience different emotions in response to the same facts due to the different associations they have made. For instance, fear in the face of a threat

may be an automatic emotional response at a primary level. However, what we consider threatening depends on the associations we have created. Therefore, one person may feel fear in response to something because they associate it with a threat, while another person may not feel fear because they do not perceive it as a threat. In summary, the presence or absence of specific emotions and their context within an individual depend on their thought processes and evaluation.

When I mention "evaluation" in this context, I mean that emotions and feelings result from our valuations and associations with reality. In other words, our emotions and feelings originate from identifying specific facts and conditions, which in turn involve associations that trigger these emotions due to their connection to perceived facts. In this approach, we do not consider emotions as entities separate from behavior but as aspects integrated into our behavior. The activation of specific emotions has a justification in the associations with facts and the perception of those facts.

Let's reconsider the fear experienced in the presence of perceived danger, such as encountering a wild animal. Focusing on the instinctive fight-or-flight reaction, we can question whether survival would be possible if the emotion lacked a connection to perceived reality. Without the prior capture and rapid evaluation of the environment, the instinctive fear response and subsequent mobilization for fight or flight would not be triggered. In this sense, fear is an integral element of this response, serving as the ultimate criterion for action based on the expected reward.

Fear manifests as the physiological response of the organism, reflected in a series of components, such as increased heart rate, sweating, pupil dilation, and hormonal secretions, among others. These physiological phenomena intertwine with the cognitive aspect of the fear experience at the mental level. The experience of fear arises from our associations and perceptions, encompassing the entire response of the organism, and ensuring the effectiveness of the required action. Emotion plays a crucial role in preparing the individual for action; however, its utility would be severely limited without the corresponding perceptions, associations, and mental integration processes of the subject.

If our preparation and physiological response lacked discrimination towards perceived reality, it is highly likely that our survival would be threatened or that our adaptation would be insufficient. For this reason, it is plausible that the mental component of emotion—that is, what one feels (or the neural pattern associated with the

subjective experience of emotion, in case the subjective manifestation does not fully align with the neural patterns, a topic I will address later)—has emerged in the course of evolution as an advantageous manifestation of our physiological reactions at the mental level. This mental aspect is highly beneficial because it is through the mental associations we make, or at least at the level of the activity of neural patterns related to the subjective experience of emotion, where we work with perceptions corresponding to reality. These perceptions can be associated with emotions that lead to specific reactions, thus generating an advantageous emotional response.

When we face a situation where we perceive someone attacking us, the emotion of anger we experience serves the function of preparing us for defense. This emotional reaction is designed to serve this purpose. However, whether this response is the appropriate course of action, according to the states of reward it implies, depends on the consequences of that action. In other words, if carrying out the action results in desirable states of reward, then the anger reaction is justified. Otherwise, the individual would lack motivation to act in that way, or it would not be the appropriate choice from the previously mentioned standpoint.

On the other hand, the emotion of joy can present a different nuance. Instead of preparing the organism for a specific behavior based on a reward, joy could be considered a subjective state of reward in itself at a given moment. It can be argued that the emotion of joy functions as a feedback mechanism, reinforcing certain behaviors by influencing the likelihood of their repetition, as it affects the underlying reward that motivates those actions. However, it would not be the reward that initially motivates the action.

It is important to note that the state of reward can be linked to more enduring moods associated with certain circumstances. In the context of emotions and many feelings that do not necessarily imply states of reward, reference might be made to certain states as "feelings," but they are not necessarily the ultimate drivers of behavior. States of reward are deeply rooted in a specific complex brain biochemistry, and the things that reward us do so because of the connections established with these states of reward. It is plausible that the emotion of joy is considered a separate reaction associated with a state of reward, although it is difficult to draw a concrete distinction between the two or identify in what aspects this emotion prepares for a specific behavior or action.

In summary, emotions play a fundamental role in preparing the individual for action and can be related to states that do not necessarily entail direct rewards. Additionally, they influence the choice of a particular course of actions, as can be observed in a person's response to fear or the lack thereof in a given situation, which determines their behavior.

From this perspective, it is argued that emotions (or most of them, considering joy as a state of reward) are not the primary cause of our actions but rather function as elements that prepare and condition a specific action. While they exert influence over the choice of our actions, the ultimate criterion guiding what we do is reward. The same applies to feelings. Even though one might experience suffering, the action undertaken is motivated by a state of reward. Reward acts as the final impetus that determines our actions. From this perspective, it is maintained that one does not act primarily to avoid suffering. Instead, one acts in search of reward, and the elimination of suffering is a consequence of this pursuit. The central motivation lies in reward, not in the avoidance of suffering, and considering the opposite would be inefficient from a cognitive and biological standpoint.

Suffering arises when the things that matter to us, like our affections and attachments, are affected or threatened. In this sense, we primarily act to protect what gives us pleasure, as there is an association of reward with it. Our actions stem from the pursuit of rewards, not the elimination of suffering, although the latter may be a consequence of seeking rewards.

It's essential to remember that states of reward are intrinsically linked to events, objects, and people. These elements are often called values because they are related to reward states. In this sense, these events, objects, or people are sources of rewarding experiences. Take the example of eating an apple. We don’t eat it solely because we subjectively find it pleasurable, detached from external reality. We objectively know that the apple is nutritious and a good food choice thanks to our thinking, observation, experimentation, and the associations we’ve formed. Reason plays a crucial role in determining which actions we take based on rewards. This reasoning is inherent in the concept of reward as a criterion since something must be associated with the reward to guide a specific action. In my view, reason relates to forming these associations between events and reward states. There are basic actions involving simpler associations, and there are behaviors requiring more elaborate reasoning.

It’s important to note that certain behaviors can become automated and reinforced through activation patterns in our brain, and these automatisms can be influenced by the environment.

Our faculty of reasoning represents a thought process involving the formation of associations between elements. Through reason, we can set goals and purposes for our actions. Values play a crucial role in our decisions and actions as they are intrinsically linked to reward states.

Every association a person establishes can have two possible directions: it can reflect their inner world, that is, their psychological functioning, or it can refer to external reality. These associations don’t necessarily have to be an accurate representation of objective reality. The validation of these associations is the task of science. When we formulate scientific questions and hypotheses, we are establishing relationships between one or more variables that must be empirically investigable. Essentially, science is an extension of our natural tendency to form associations. However, it’s common to view science as a body of knowledge, which can sometimes be detrimental since knowledge can bias our thinking and hinder the perception of evident relationships in reality. Instead of focusing exclusively on results, we should pay attention to the process, that is, the formation of associations between concepts, and how to make this process as efficient and creative as possible to faithfully reflect reality.

When we try to associate two seemingly unrelated concepts, like "light" and "knowledge," the process involves finding similarities or differences between them to establish a connection. Essentially, we look for a common reference that allows for the association. In this case, light gives us the ability to see, and seeing enables us to understand and acquire knowledge about reality. The association is made through the idea of "awareness," which acts as a link between the two concepts.

The ability to form associations in our minds is crucial for understanding the world and generating knowledge, though this knowledge may or may not faithfully represent reality. If we want to establish a relationship between "darkness" and "knowledge," we can use the common reference of the concept of "awareness" and associate the opposite of this notion in the case of darkness, as it opposes light. This process involves forming a relationship based on opposition.

Various types of relationships can emerge, some of which may be considered creative because they are uncommon, difficult to understand, or not immediately obvious.

If a robot were built with perceptual abilities similar to humans and the capacity to form associations, there is debate about whether this would demonstrate intelligence and complexity equivalent to ours. While the problem of representing emotions remains a challenge, the process of forming associations would still be a fundamental part of the robot's functioning.

Many people argue that what makes humans unique is not necessarily an immaterial quality but a combination of factors, including the mind, consciousness, the ability to form complex associations, emotionality, and self-awareness. This perception does not necessarily rely on religious beliefs but on the inherent complexity of the human mind and its capacity to understand and relate to the world around it.

It is valid to argue that material causes in the brain are the root of the material states that relate to mental states. When studying the human brain, we observe the material manifestation of the mind, that is, what happens in the brain. However, this does not strictly imply that the mind is independent of matter or that it exists "beyond" brain function. The mind must be based on matter, or more specifically, be a manifestation of it. But this, in turn, does not necessarily imply that the mind must be material. We can study, identify, and understand the material and report what we consider to be mental. Without matter, we wouldn't have the mind we do, and fundamentally, without the brain, it does not strictly follow that we wouldn't have what we call the mind, as we still do not fully understand what consciousness really is. The mind could be immaterial but dependent on matter.

Saying that the mind is not matter does not imply it is something specific; we are simply making a negative statement, which brings its own conceptual problems. However, we can often advance our understanding of something, albeit in a limited way, by identifying what it is not.

On the other hand, there is a wealth of evidence supporting the interconnection between the brain and what we call the mind. Saying that the mind is the brain, however, is not a claim that can be taken for granted. This issue generates much confusion due to the nature of mental states. An individual's mind represents a boundary

in the sense that it can only be subjectively experienced by that particular person. When we observe brain activity, we are observing a manifestation of a mental state that can only be subjectively experienced by the person whose brain is generating that activity. So far, we do not have the capability or knowledge to express one person's mental states in another person's experience.

The perspective that the mind is material implies that if matter presents a structure that determines its functioning and states, we, as material beings, must also present a structure that determines our mental states.

Even if the mind were considered something separate from matter, this does not necessarily mean that the mind lacks laws or principles governing its functioning and its relationship with free will. These laws could act as constraints on free will, meaning that the mind would still function causally at some level.

Returning to the previous example about the relationship between light and knowledge: What is the underlying reason why we establish a connection based on the similarity between the concepts involved? Why do we adopt this particular criterion? If behavior is based on the connection between concepts and, as I mentioned earlier, there is no logical necessity to perform a specific behavior, then the connection itself cannot be considered a necessary consequence of logic; it is more of a logical structure in itself but is not necessarily deduced from logic.

What has determined that we should relate, for example, an unconditioned stimulus and its unconditioned response with a conditioned stimulus that produces a conditioned response, as occurs in classical conditioning? The answer lies in the theory of natural selection. This must have conferred a survival advantage, but how does this process manifest in our brain?

We generate connections between concepts in relation to reality through the act of perception. If I say, "I see a cup on top of the table," this connection of concepts arises from perception, possibly influenced by certain internal rules (such as the law of Prägnanz from Gestalt theory), but ultimately depends on external factors, that is, the relationships between objects in reality, with some influence from internal elements. As long as it is not all due to imagination or delusion, the experience of perception is based on what our brain represents as "qualia." Brain patterns are activated in response to entities in the real world, and the fact that these entities are presented simultaneously

implies a relationship that manifests as a particular connection. These connections refer to objects and their relationships in reality.

However, we also create connections between concepts that arise from our own mental generation, through our brains, independently of internal states. This type of connection is formed by relating concepts such as "light" and "knowledge." The arbitrariness is evident when we associate a word with a concept, in the sense that there is no imperative necessity to assign a particular word to a concept instead of another word, although there is some determination in this process.

Consider the example where similarity manifests as an expression of the association process, being the simultaneous activation of the association state of concepts "awareness" for both chains of association of the respective concepts. The relationship between "light" and "knowledge" as it manifests seems to derive directly from the brain's structure and associative mode of functioning. The way an association is established appears simply as a manifestation of the operation and structure of our brain.

The activation of a connection linking two concepts, that is, an association that applies equally to both concepts, develops due to the existing interconnections in our brain. But what leads us to determine this connection as the appropriate one? This is due to the nature of the associative process.

Let’s consider what drives us to seek a relationship between these two concepts. This can be triggered by a cue, whether it's a "self-instruction" or an external instruction. If someone asked us to identify a relationship between these two concepts, in this case, we would be following a "self-instruction." The cue in question implies an association between concepts based on another relationship that allows us to establish a connection between the result of the association of the concepts, the relationship itself, and the provided cue.

If we posed the same question to a young child about the relationship between "light" and "knowledge," they might not understand the question. In such a case, we could rephrase the question as: "How are 'light' and 'knowledge' similar?" assuming the child is familiar with both concepts. Through this process, one learns that the notion of "relationship" implies "likeness" or "similarity" due to the association of these terms.

Therefore, there is no fixed rule of similarity; rather, "relationship" is associated with "similarity." This is its meaning in that context, and this is how it is learned.

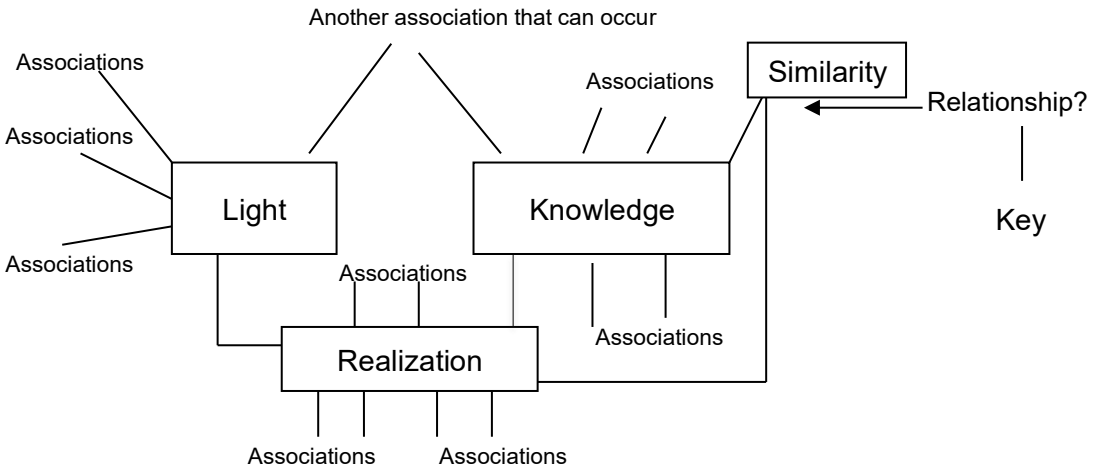
Thus, the activation of the brain pattern corresponding to "relationship" along with the activation of the pattern related to "how are they alike" (similarity) leads to a consolidation, which is inherent to the nature of our brains and underpins the associative process. In this context, "association" is the result of the joint activation of these two consolidated patterns, meaning the activation of one of these patterns triggers the activation of the other, which forms the basis of the association. What has been shaped by natural selection is the way our brain works, and from this, our supposed notions about how we associate things are expressed. Learning also influences how we establish connections between certain concepts, as we learn concepts and words together, in specific contexts, which establishes particular structures in our brain.

So, how do we establish the connection between "relationship" and "similarity"? In the mentioned example, this connection is established through perception, as we perceive, based on what others tell us, that one thing resembles another, which leads us to relate "relationship" with "similarity." This association is based on the perception of the nature of things and the way they are interconnected in reality. Even if this association originally arose through the influence of another person rather than a direct perception experience, it is rooted in the biology of our perception and the way we experience things in our brain, as brain patterns are activated in response to entities in reality, for instance.

The physical properties that are similar or identical in two objects must translate into similar or identical brain activation patterns. These patterns are associated because they partially reflect the same information and represent the same thing in the brain. The formation of associations arises as a natural result of the brain's structure and functioning. Therefore, when two elements share a similar activation pattern, the activation of one is more likely to lead to the activation of the other, establishing an association.

In the case of the "realization" process between the concepts of "light" and "knowledge," this refers to a common activation pattern related to the association of elements linked to the concepts of "light" and "knowledge." The experience of "realization" emerges as an effective response based on the association with the cue "similarity" or "how are they alike," which in turn is associated with the concept of

"relationship." In the mental realm, what essentially exists are associations, that is, an activation pattern leading to the activation of another pattern. The basis of the response lies in the fact that the different elements must be connected in some way, so that the activation of one influences the activation of another (the influence will depend on the structure of the neural networks, for example), which, in turn, generates a specific response. The neural structure representing all these associations is activated, and a set of activated associations that share a common pattern, due to the "similarity" relationship, is considered the effective response, which we call "realization."



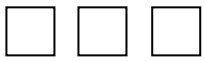
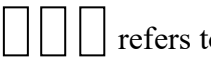
There are associations that activate for each term, and the "farthest" association in terms of complexity or perhaps located in less obvious areas of the neural networks is often considered what we call "creative." Each term, like "light" and "knowledge," has associations that contribute to defining its meaning, just like terms such as "relationship," which is associated with "similarity."

The key that leads to "similarity" (which itself has a set of associations that determine its meaning) must be related to or associated with a series of connections that share a common pattern with the group of associations that define the concepts. The activation of the common pattern that has the most characteristics in common with the subject at that particular moment will lead to the response of "realization." The process of functioning in association, as described in previous propositions, is fundamental to understanding how this process occurs.

This involves a process of integrating associations through connections that are generated or, more precisely, activated, and that arise from such activation. Although this process is highly complex, the structure and the way associations are organized by neural patterns largely determine how responses are generated and how they represent "solutions" to problems that arise from certain keys. This, in turn, follows a deterministic scheme, as everything depends on the activation that originates and the structure involved in that process.

Therefore, the notion of similarity or relationship is a manifestation of associative functioning and the structure of associations in our brain. The way things are connected in our brain, their internal structure, is fundamental. Simply put, learning about the similarity between two or more objects involves the simultaneous activation of the pattern that represents the object with which they share common characteristics, which is then consolidated. Subsequently, the activation of the similarity pattern leads to the identification of common characteristics that can extend to other objects. The activation of these patterns can occur simultaneously and consolidate, or not occur, which will determine whether an association is established or not.

At the highest level of associations, perception is involved, which reflects, for example, the relationships between objects in reality. At this level, associations are directly related to the perception of reality or internal states, which in turn influences the way we associate concepts and objects.

Find a relationship between:  and  refers to the activation of a common pattern referring to the physical characteristics of what is perceived.

The relationship between "light" and "knowledge" is established as an association that exists in our mind, not as an inherent characteristic of reality itself. Essentially, "knowledge" implies the existence of an entity that possesses knowledge. Expressions like "Oh heavens!" refer to reality as an association based on the perception of the expression in reality, although these expressions had to be generated at some point by an individual or group of individuals. This may seem arbitrary, similar to the choice of terms that designate concepts, as there is apparently no intrinsic need to associate one particular expression over another, even though there may be an underlying reason or cause for it.

The similarity or difference we establish between objects or concepts does not always necessarily reflect reality as it is; in many cases, these similarities or differences exist exclusively in our mind and are based on our psychology. However, it is possible to have associations of concepts that genuinely refer to reality as a genuine relationship between elements in the external world.

When we hear a word, a specific set of neurons is activated, forming a neural pattern that corresponds to the set of associations that allows the understanding of that word. This neural pattern is associated with the word in question, including its associations with its use, the object it represents, and related experiences, among other aspects. To recognize a written word, as part of the process of accessing the phonological code associated with it, one must have learned the association between that written word (visual code) and the corresponding phonemes (auditory level) that represent it according to the language used. This implies that the perception of the written word must go hand in hand with the activation of the phonemes, and this connection is established throughout the learning process.

Once this association is consolidated in memory, a change occurs in the brain structure. This allows the activation of a neural pattern, such as the one related to the written code, to have a high probability of activating, through synaptic connections, the pattern corresponding to the auditory code of that written word. For this joint activation of neural patterns representing different sensory codes (which are located in separate brain areas) to occur, it is necessary to have neural connections at the structural level in the brain. These connections allow the activation of one pattern to simply lead to the activation of another pattern, which in turn can activate other patterns, such as those related to the motor control necessary for pronouncing the word.

This process does not imply that one region of the brain, such as the one responsible for processing the auditory information of words, "analyzes" the activity coming from another brain region, such as the one responsible for the visual perception of the word. Instead, the activation of one neural pattern directly leads to the activation of another, and this cascade of activations occurs thanks to the structural connections linking these brain areas, allowing effective integration of information across different sensory codes.

Given the intricate connections between concepts in our brain, it is possible to find some type of relationship between any pair of concepts, even if they appear to have no

relation. This is because, in some way, the concepts will be connected through common patterns. The perception that two concepts have no relationship is based on the subjective idea that there are no obvious or nearby common patterns in the chain of associations connecting those concepts. In other words, the similarities between the common patterns may be so distant or involve such an extensive path in the network of associations that they end up being perceived as irrelevant to the subject. Generally, the nearest or most evident common patterns are considered similarities simply because they are more accessible to our mind, not necessarily because they are the only ones that exist.

However, it is important to note that our brain is shaped by natural selection and has a particular nature that influences the formation of specific associations. These associations are established according to the biology of our brain, which means we respond to reality in a certain way predefined by our brain structure and sensory perception. Associations are established as a result of natural associative functioning, the biological structure of our brain, and the way we experience reality through our senses.

Ultimately, our world, at its core, is perceived and structured based on our biology, and from there, associations are generated, which may seem arbitrary in the mentioned sense or may be based on external keys or generated internally through the association of concepts. All of this follows a determined course, based on causes and effects.

The issue of consciousness raises questions about its role in our behavior and perception. It is often said that someone acts unconsciously, meaning without being aware of what they are doing. In this context, what really happens is that there is no activation of neural patterns linking what one does with the associations that refer to oneself and the causes of one's behavior. Consciousness is related to the activation of neural patterns and the associations we create. "Greater consciousness" in our actions is associated with greater activation of patterns and more connections between them, implying more associative work. This can have advantages in establishing relationships that lead us to states of greater reward.

However, it is important to understand that consciousness is not something separate from associative functioning and pattern activation. We cannot "consciously do something" independently of causality. Consciousness is integrated into neural activation patterns. It can be the result of the activation of certain patterns or, in some

cases, the activation itself of patterns. In both cases, consciousness is not a separate entity that can cause the activation of brain patterns; rather, it is related to the activation of patterns and is a product of the physical and biochemical functioning of our brain.

From a physicalist perspective, the execution of bodily movements, such as moving a limb, involves the activation of specific groups of neurons that control those movements. The activation of these neural patterns is determined by physical and biological factors, and consciousness is intrinsically related to these physical and biological processes rather than being a separate entity that can independently influence brain activity.

It is important to recognize that we cannot "consciously" activate a group of neurons or directly influence neuronal processes at the molecular or cellular level. The activation of an action potential in a neuron, which is fundamental for the transmission of nerve impulses, is based on physical and chemical properties, as well as the biological structure of the involved neurons. To trigger an action potential, a specific firing threshold must be surpassed, which is achieved through the accumulation of temporal and spatial graded potentials provided by connections with other neurons. These connections must also follow the same processes to send a signal.

In this context, we cannot consciously activate a sodium ion channel or directly influence the production of neurotransmitters in a neuron. If we wanted to do so consciously, we would need to activate those processes first to be aware of wanting to do it. However, this presents a paradox since we cannot be conscious before becoming conscious. In other words, we cannot "consciously" initiate a process that makes us conscious because we would need that process to make a conscious decision in the first place.

Ultimately, the brain processes underlying consciousness, decision-making, and neural pattern activation are subject to causality. We cannot claim, based on brain functioning, that there is a part of the brain outside of causality or that neural activation patterns can transcend causality and determine their own causes. Consciousness and brain activity are intrinsically linked to causal processes and cannot exist independently of them.

It is possible for us to perform conscious actions, which means we are capable of perceiving and understanding what we are doing. However, this ability to manifest

consciousness in our actions is intricately related to the activation of mental patterns and the connections established between them.

To illustrate this point, consider the act of lifting an arm in a specific manner. Before we can perform this action, a process of mental pattern activation, induced by certain underlying causes, is required. It is important to note that the activation of a pattern itself cannot be the cause that sets it in motion, as prior causes must exist to initiate its activation. If a pattern could activate itself, there would be no need for prior causes to set it in motion.

The notion of "consciously performing an action," like the idea that the activation of a pattern can be caused by its own consciousness, entails a paradox. This would be equivalent to suggesting that consciousness itself is capable of establishing the cause of its own activation, which ultimately is not possible. If we consider that there is a center of consciousness or a "self" that has control over the functions of the individual, this center cannot determine itself as the primary cause of an action, as it is subject to the activations and causes that operate independently of its influence.

Consequently, we can conclude that while we may be aware of our actions, we cannot attribute the existence of a center or dimension called "consciousness" or "self" as the primary cause of our actions, independent of causality. From a brain perspective, consciousness or the "self" would imply the activation of neural patterns, and this activation is subject to causes that consciousness itself cannot determine autonomously.

In the work mentioned in the preface of this book, I expand on these concepts and present a non-physicalist conception of consciousness, along with its adaptive function. In that context, I explored the possibility of a more radical free will and the idea that consciousness could exert influence over the brain. However, it is important to note that this perspective is based on the evolution of my ideas about consciousness, which are detailed in the following pages.

Throughout this work, we will focus on developments originating from a material perspective. Nevertheless, I encourage the reader to consult my new work to delve deeper into the non-material conception of consciousness and how it is based on some of the points explored in this book.

Continuing from the above, if the state changes of the elements that make up our brain occurred without a determined cause, that is, if the transition to a specific state

instead of another lacked an intrinsic connection to the structure of these elements, it would follow that an individual's actions would be essentially random. Additionally, the functioning of a "self" would be equally random.

If we considered that consciousness or the "self" were a primary cause not subject to the causal process of the brain, meaning it existed in a domain beyond causality and had the capacity to establish causes for associations and actions that were not based on any fundamental reason, then human behavior would become completely arbitrary.

Consider the concept of will in the previously described context, as the capacity to generate an effect without a discernible cause at the brain level. This notion does not hold in the realm of the brain. Decisions are often spoken of as if, instead of referring to a causal process where consciousness manifests, there existed an independent entity called consciousness or "self" that was the primary cause of a specific process. However, we must recognize that these notions of consciousness or "self" must also be subject to causes, as they refer to a level of action. If we eliminate causal processes, there is no room for the existence of consciousness or the "self" in the sense we commonly understand them. It is fundamental to understand that our identity is the result of a caused process, which is revealing when addressing questions such as "are we free?" or "do we possess free will?".

The crucial issue here is that the very identity underlying the statements "I am" or "I have" is formed through a determined process. This leads us to rethink the notion of will, which many individuals seem to conceive as the ability to generate effects without an apparent cause, towards a conception that reflects a process that selects a specific action based on defined criteria, such as certain objectives, and ultimately results in particular behavior. This process is, essentially, determined.

A classic experiment conducted by Benjamin Libet suggests that the processes related to a "volitional act," such as making a decision to carry out an action, begin in an unconscious sphere (see reference 7 at the end of this work). This finding seems to support the previously mentioned idea that the erroneous conception of an entity called consciousness that exercises agency over behavior by issuing causes without being caused. This resembles the conception of will that many hold. However, it is important to highlight that my clarification is more specific in this sense. In the case of Libet's experiment, reference is made to a supposed veto power over a specific action, which would represent the individual's capacity for deliberate choice. Nonetheless, this veto

power is also subject to processes that the person cannot consciously control, and these processes are what make such a veto possible.

In other words, a person's structure can influence their decisions and choices, but there is no capacity to generate manifestations without any cause, driven solely by personal agency. If we consider that consciousness refers to brain activity and certain associations, and that it is subject to causes, since brain activity itself is caused, we could conclude that the expression of consciousness depends, in part, on the activity of specific brain patterns. It is possible that not all brain activity implies consciousness, or that certain brain activity leads to another that represents consciousness.

In this particular experiment, participants were asked to freely choose the moment they wanted to move a part of their body while researchers observed their brain activity. What was subsequently discovered is that the brain activity related to this action began to manifest in the brain before the subjects became aware of their own decision to make the movement. In other words, the brain activity that does not represent consciousness and serves as the basis for the idea of will or conscious decision to move started before the person consciously decided to do so. It is important to emphasize that there is no true conscious agency in this process; brain activity, that is, the activation of neural patterns, is the key factor, and this activation has preceding causes.

Libet's findings suggest that an individual's decisions are primarily shaped and originated at an unconscious level before translating into a conscious decision. Although the subject may believe that all this occurred under their own volition, Libet's interpretation is that the brain initiation of what he describes as "a spontaneous and freely voluntary act" begins in the unconscious realm before subjective awareness of the decision to act is generated.

Libet's experiment refers to what is called the "Readiness Potential" (RP), which is an increase in brain activity recorded in the central areas of the scalp during the seconds preceding a voluntary movement. This increase is measured in temporal terms (see reference 8 at the end of this work for more details). This brain activity precedes the awareness of the resulting movement by up to two seconds. However, it is important to note that there are criticisms regarding the interpretation of the RP, questioning whether it truly reflects preconscious planning or simply the preparation for movement (see reference 9 at the end of this work for more details).

However, it has also been argued that the ongoing negative shifts in electro-cortical potentials, which refer to RPs and facilitate "self-initiated" movement, are not necessarily related to the underlying processes of preparation or the decision itself to carry out an action. The criticisms in this regard are varied. Some argue that the spontaneous fluctuations of electro-cortical potentials constitute a significant part of RPs but that this activity does not influence the choice between two alternatives; rather, it might reflect general preparation (see reference 10 at the end of this work for detailed information).

Moreover, notable RPs have been recorded in the absence of movement, and processes related to motor function do not seem to significantly influence RPs (see reference 9 at the end of this work for more information). An intriguing finding is that the presence of RPs decreased in individuals who were induced to disbelieve in free will. This effect seemed to manifest more than a second before the participants consciously decided to move (see reference 11 at the end of this work).

Even though the activity related to Libet's experiment is not linked to intentional movement, this does not alter the underlying logic that intentional movement implies a deterministic process and a causal structure. In other words, what is being suggested here is that even if the processes leading to action occur after a person consciously decides to perform an action, this does not imply that the process occurs outside of causality, nor that conscious decision-making takes place in the sense of causal agency on a fundamental level. This is because these processes of volition and decision-making are ultimately caused, and the processes that lead to the awareness of a decision or the conscious generation of a decision cannot be generated by consciousness itself, as explained earlier.

It is fundamental to understand that consciousness does not exist as something separate from causality. All concepts such as "agency," "will," "decision," and "choice" refer to processes that have causes; specifically, they relate to the activation of neural patterns in the brain. In other words, consciousness, like activation patterns, has underlying causes. Otherwise, when speaking of conscious decisions or an individual's will, we would be suggesting the existence of a space in the brain from which causes originate that affect the brain's overall functioning. This, in turn, would imply that there is something beyond the brain that determines our actions, but so far there is no

evidence to support this idea, as everything we know about our functions and actions relates to brain functioning, which is subject to causes.

If we claim that consciousness refers to the activation of patterns without causes, the question arises as to how they were activated in the first place. Additionally, the activation pattern itself cannot be the cause of its own activation, as its existence depends on prior causes that activate it. This notion would imply that the causes are located on a structural level subsequent to the effects, which contradicts the fundamental principles of causality.

The concept of consciousness raises fundamental questions about its functionality and nature. If we accept the possibility that what we consider a conscious process can exist as something unconscious, it is reasonable to question whether consciousness is intrinsically related to the process itself, such as attention, decision-making, or reasoning, among other cognitive aspects. Here lies the question of what the purpose of consciousness is, that is, what its function is. We are often reluctant to consider the idea that consciousness might not have a specific function, as this could be perceived as a loss of value. Nevertheless, consciousness, as I describe it, remains valuable because it is intrinsically related to our identity.

Decision-making and reasoning, on the other hand, are faculties that seem to have an evolutionary advantage, meaning they play an adaptive role. Therefore, I speak of consciousness as something related to our identity rather than an adaptation with a specific function. However, there is the aspect of becoming aware of something, which implies integration. This integration can be adaptive, as it allows for greater understanding and, in some cases, may favor survival. The issue here is that survival is not directly related to consciousness itself, that is, to our identity, but to integration and the ability to activate adaptive behaviors through that integration.

The metaphor of the eye capturing something in reality is used to illustrate that consciousness is of something in particular. When we see something, it implies that by being conscious of seeing something, we must have the capacity to do so. This could form the basis of what is called self-awareness, which refers to the recognition that there is something observing due to the presence of an observed object. All perceptual elements related to our own body (proprioceptive) are closely related to this process, as they are the inputs about our organism, the knowing entity, and they contribute to self-awareness by promoting representations of what we know.

When I hold an object in my hand, a perception occurs, meaning I become aware of something. The notion that something is being perceived implies that, from the subject's point of view, an inference process is activated, along with associations related to what is being perceived. This inference refers to the fact that there is something or someone doing the perceiving. In other words, there is a connection between the process of perception and self-awareness. Self-awareness manifests during the act of perceiving something and is related to the subject's ability to refer to themselves and their senses.

Being conscious of something implies the activation of associations related to what is perceived, whether in the external or internal realm. This process is common in other animals as well. However, self-awareness develops when an association is established between the activation related to what is perceived and a set of associations that refer to the subject and the environment that perceives. In short, self-awareness means that not only are there patterns activated in relation to something perceived, but there is also an inference about the existence of something or someone perceiving, which is expressed by the pronoun "I."

When we say "I feel something," the term "I" refers to the entity perceiving, and this inference is essential for self-awareness. However, it is possible to have the sensation of "feeling something" without necessarily making the inference of "I." The aspects that contribute to the formation of the "I" or identity at a given moment depend on the integrations and associations the subject maintains regarding experiences related to entities that refer to themselves, such as their own body, for example. In summary, saying "I perceive something" implies recognizing both the perception of something and the inference that there is an "I" doing the perceiving.

This would imply that the concept of "I" and self-awareness develop after perception. In other words, they arise once something has been perceived and there has been a subjective manifestation of various sensations. From these manifestations, we can make certain inferences that lead us to the notion of the "I." This notion of the "I" originates in a prior process where we are conscious of various things.

The "I" should not be considered an autonomous entity without determining causes in itself. Instead, we use the term "I" to refer to a specific set of associated elements, which in this case are various sensations. The "I" is not an entity separate from these associations; rather, it is the associations that generate actions, which we commonly

know as reflection, choice, and ultimately the conception of the "I," along with other products of brain function.

In evolutionary terms, the presence of self-awareness in people could simply be the result of the advantage that comes from having a greater capacity to establish associations. This capacity is what allows phenomena like self-awareness to exist, not because self-awareness itself is an inherent advantage.

Following the analogy of an eye observing objects in reality, we can state that this organ perceives things but cannot perceive itself directly, just as what it perceives cannot perceive itself immediately. This is due to the nature of perception, which involves the existence of two entities: the perceiver and the perceived. In the context of the nervous system's functioning, what is perceived is what activates, and the patterns activated by what activates are what is perceived.

Therefore, it is contradictory to claim that the perceiver can perceive itself directly. The only possibility would be indirect perception, where something is perceived that reflects what is perceived. In the case of the nervous system, talking about self-perception would be equivalent to asserting that what is activated is what activates what is activated. For the eye, looking into a mirror suffices to understand this notion.

When we apply this reasoning to the context of the brain, which ultimately is what gets activated based on what we perceive, especially in the case of neuronal activation patterns, certain issues arise. However, considering that perception reflects the form of a neuronal pattern in this context is not sufficient to understand the manifestation of qualia, which are subjective experiences.

It is crucial to recognize that qualia are the result of experience, perception, or apprehension, and they are not part of the components of the process of perception or experience, nor are they one of the parts that constitute these processes. The confusion arises from considering that, just as there is perception of the eye when looking in a mirror, there is a quale based on a neuronal pattern once that pattern captures a form of itself. However, this premise is based on certain confusions and lacks solidity, as will be explained later.

Let's consider certain experiments conducted on patients who have undergone the severing of the corpus callosum, resulting in the separation of both brain hemispheres with no direct communication between them. Let's examine, for example, the case of

experiments related to the perception of a specific aroma in individuals with split brains. It is important to highlight that the olfactory system, unlike other sensory systems, does not have a cross-connection between the brain hemispheres. This means that smells detected through the left nostril are processed by the left hemisphere, while smells perceived through the right nostril are processed by the right hemisphere.

In most individuals, the regions responsible for verbal communication are lateralized in the left hemisphere, at least to a significant extent. When a split-brain patient is exposed to an aroma near their nose, but with the left nostril blocked, it appears that they do not consciously perceive the aroma, at least on the surface. However, the right hemisphere seems to be capable of identifying it, as the right nostril remains clear. If the person is asked to point to the object corresponding to the aroma from a set of objects, they do so using only their left hand, which is controlled by the right hemisphere that has detected the aroma.

It is argued that the subject cannot consciously perceive the aroma in this situation because the necessary connections to the verbal communication areas, located in the left hemisphere, are not established. On the other hand, when the aroma is provided with the left nostril clear, the patient can perceive it and describe its nature, as the information reaches the regions in the left hemisphere responsible for verbal communication. This evidence suggests the hypothesis that individuals become aware of perceptions when the information reaches the language areas, at least according to the results of these experiments (see reference 12 in the "References" section at the end of this work).

However, another interpretation of these results could be proposed. From this perspective, the existence of two distinct identities, one for each cerebral hemisphere, is considered. When the hemispheres are connected, a unified subjective experience arises. However, when they are separated, the left hemisphere manifests an experience independent of the right hemisphere, and vice versa, due to the lack of unification. It could be inferred that two entities exist, analogous to the relationship between people, who are not directly aware of each other's minds but infer mental states through observable expressions and behaviors.

If both hemispheres had the same linguistic capacity, similar to that of the left hemisphere, the situation would resemble two individuals coexisting in the same body, with notable differences, as one identity would not have access to the experiences associated with the other identity. Similarly, an individual is not aware of the particular

subjective manifestations corresponding to other individuals, as they only experience their own mental states.

These simple observations about the world and these phenomena raise significant questions about the nature of consciousness. They highlight the idea that we are not aware of the subjective states of other people and, in parallel, a person with a split brain would experience a reduction in their subjective experience that was previously present, as it is now restricted to separated cerebral hemispheres.

In this context, the key lies in the concept of "being" and identity with something. This could be the key to understanding qualia, that is, the fundamental enigma surrounding subjective experience and how it originates in the first place. This could be the first step in the search for an answer to the "hard problem of consciousness." For more information, see reference 13 in the "References" section at the end of this work.

It is important to clarify that, in the context of consciousness as quale or subjective experience, the key does not lie in integration, that is, in the ability to be aware of something at a given moment, as I mentioned previously. Rather, the fundamental piece is the concept of "being something." Integration refers to being aware of something that is incorporated into the existing conscious experience but does not constitute the fundamental basis.

This assertion is supported by the atomic notion of brain function. Each element of conscious experience is in itself a complete universe. While neuronal groups can activate others, certain common concepts do not apply at this level. For example, each element of consciousness does not "is aware of" or "perceives" another element, and under this atomic notion, it is not possible for such integration to allow distinctions between these elements, such as differentiating a quale referring to a specific color from another. None of these elements can "account for" the aspects of the other, and no particular group or center can achieve this. To some extent, one could say that these elements are "uncommunicated" according to the traditional concept of communication, and only activation of one element by another can exist, which constitutes the essential aspect.

When we consider other people and their conscious experiences, we might imagine a thought experiment where a bridge or connection (acting as a form of integration) is established between two individuals and their respective neural activities. In this case,

integration refers to the connection of already existing conscious experiences; that is, consciousness is already present in each individual. In this context, integration is not the crucial element; rather, the fundamental aspect is how one element joins another from the perspective of identity. There is always a latent perspective, and we are inevitably beings anchored or centered in a particular identity.

One could argue, however, that there is an intrinsic connection with an integrated system. This is because by establishing a linkage, we are essentially connecting with integrated components, which in turn entail consciousness. However, upon deeper analysis, the implicit notion of being something in particular or situating ourselves in a context of identity with a specific element underlies this. This becomes evident when we claim that we are linking with an integrated system, but in this example, we ourselves constitute an integrated system.

Furthermore, we can extend this same reasoning to the level of two individuals, leading us to conclude that integration is not the central factor in consciousness. By exploring the components of conscious experience in a person and how one becomes aware of something, we observe that, similar to how a person becomes aware of a subjective experience, there is an integration of an element that becomes conscious in an experience that is already conscious. In other words, qualia manifest in a context of identity with them.

However, it is worth noting that a conscious experience contains elements that are integrated, but mere integration does not guarantee consciousness or the manifestation of qualia. When an element is detached, it is no longer conscious from the perspective of the rest of the conscious experience with which it was linked. In other words, it depends on the point of view from which one identifies with something. If we put ourselves in the position of the element that was detached, what loses its consciousness is the entire rest of the conscious experience with which that element was related.

This phenomenon is analogous to the situation of split-brain patients, where what is perceived as subjective experience depends on the perspective from which one is located, whether it be one hemisphere or the other. This location involves establishing an identity with a specific aspect, that is, being the activity of one hemisphere or the other.

If we extrapolate this example to the fundamental elements of conscious experience and separate them, we encounter elements that can be qualia and others that are not, even if they are integrated. However, the mere fact of being integrated or not does not determine whether they pertain to a subjective experience. The way these fundamental elements are structured, such as the quale of a color, for instance, does not reflect an integration of information at the neuronal level in the same sense that one might speak of consciousness emerging from integration at a fundamental level.

Instead, it is about a pattern composed of various neuronal elements that encode a fundamental or elemental aspect of information in the context of conscious experience. In other words, only from this point does an element of information relevant to the dimension of conscious experience get incorporated. Before this point, neurons are merely components that do not encode or refer to a subjective experience.

Therefore, to be aware of a person's experience, on a fundamental level, it would be necessary to be that person, that is, to adopt the neuronal patterns that that person has, regardless of the explanations of qualia or integration.

Being conscious of something would imply being certain qualia, which constitute a kind of sense of identity. It is not appropriate to say that one identity is aware of the qualia of another, as each identity is not equivalent to those qualia. The world or reality is composed of a multiplicity of entities, and we, as human beings, are an integral part of what constitutes the world; in other words, reality includes us.

We can perceive various entities that make up what we call reality, but on a deeper level, we are something specific, and this implies that there is a relationship of identity with that. I propose that what we are in mental terms refers to qualia; in other words, we are the qualia, and there is an identity connection with them. It's not that the qualia related to the self and to different perceptions are something independent or different from what we are. In my opinion, what we constitute in mental terms refers to qualia, and there is an identity relationship with them.

Those qualia experiences of which we are not aware would be considered unconscious, just as the qualia associated with the activity of the right hemisphere would be unconscious if we were an identity based in the left hemisphere, separate from the other identity. If we are not a particular quale, that quale is beyond our consciousness, similar to how what another subject is said to experience, feel, think, or

remember is not part of our consciousness and, therefore, is out of our reach, so to speak.

There is something we are, which is qualia. In a fundamental sense, I assert that we are qualia. What we generally consider to be our ego refers to different qualia. At the same time, the experience that constitutes my consciousness at this moment is a manifestation of qualia. Right now, I am expressing my thoughts through qualia. In short, everything I experience and remember is related to qualia. For this reason, I maintain that we are qualia, and our identity is intrinsically linked to them. The qualia themselves constitute a unitary entity that is part of reality, and I will clarify this point in detail.

It is possible that there are qualia of which we are not aware, if, in addition to the qualia we are aware of and the neuronal activity they entail, there is, at any given moment, other neuronal activity related to certain qualia of which we are not conscious. This could be due to the lack of a unified or unitary manifestation of all that specific activity, that is, the absence of a sense of identity that encompasses that quale in union with the rest of the qualia that make up our experience, so there is no single ultimate identity.

When I assert that we are something specific and that this relates to "qualia," I am not suggesting that the body, brain, and mind are disconnected, nor that the mind is everything while the body is insignificant. Although some people hold this perspective, it is not my position. The body is intrinsically related to the mind and the mental; it is not inferior nor should it be discarded in favor of the mental, as such an approach would be detrimental. We have a body, which means there is a bodily entity that pertains to our experience and contributes to the entity we are in terms of experience. It is important to remember that, additionally, "qualia" could be considered some aspect of neuronal activity, or even if they were not, they would still refer to a unitary entity that encompasses what we generally call existence, that is, matter and energy. This position does not align with a dualistic perspective.

On the other hand, if we consider that we are the "qualia" and that these are related to an entity generated by the brain but not to the brain activity itself, we could argue that what we desire, want, and decide is not really a manifestation of our will, but rather the result of what the brain desires and decides in its functioning. However, this assertion lacks coherence, as it would essentially mean that we are merely a reflection of what

brain activity is. Under this perspective, brain and mind would essentially be the same in terms of what manifests in both dimensions.

It is important to highlight that the line of causality originates in the brain, as discussed in notions of self, free will, and consciousness. In the case of the previous assertion, the brain is an integral part of what we are; without it, there would be no "qualia" that form our identity. However, beyond this relationship, in terms of what is expressed or manifested, we could affirm that we are essentially the same, not in the sense of a unified identity, but in the sense of equivalence regarding the essence of what is generated. Therefore, we can state that we think, decide, and desire, as well as think, decide, and desire the specific things associated with our identity. All this manifests in the mental realm, even if this mental aspect, composed of "qualia," is a product of neuronal activity.

We can experience rewards not only for what we think and decide, considering the mental dimension, but also for having a brain associated with those "qualia" that form our identity and are produced by that brain. The organism is the concept that encompasses all these components. It is important to consider this aspect when discussing our abilities and actions, as we must extend our understanding to the various elements of the organism for our behaviors to take place. We may have in mind (and in our nervous system, which contributes to our identity in terms of what we are) the series of movements necessary to perform a piano sonata, but without our limbs, muscles, and other physical components, we could not carry it out. Similarly, even if we have the determination, we could not run a marathon if we do not have a body resilient enough to do so.

We can have a particularly resilient body due to genetics, and we can experience rewards associated with having that body. However, this body is part of our organism but does not directly constitute what forms our identity, that is, what we are in terms of identity. We need memory and other mental faculties associated with our thinking (what we identify with what we are) to carry out other associations and tasks. Sometimes, these associations can be established without being directly related to the activity we are, but they can later be linked to what we are, as they originate when we think about a specific problem and represent a part of what we can do. However, I doubt the extent of these associations in terms of what we are capable of doing, as the associations that

directly refer to a problem would hardly originate without being determined by our thinking, in the sense that they represent a part of what we are capable of doing.

To assert that we possess a kind of sense of identity implies considering the existence of a unitary entity, a cohesive entity that, as I will detail later, refers to a single being. However, in the context of the previously mentioned experiment, it would not be appropriate to claim that information "reaches" the centers of verbal communication as if there were a direct transfer from one point to another. Although it could be argued that, in a certain sense, a transmission of events or affectations occurs, what I want to highlight is that, within our nervous system, neuronal activity does not necessarily imply the transfer of a neuronal pattern, which supposedly represents a specific aspect of perception, from one place to another in the brain, as if we were sending a letter from one recipient to another.

Instead of conceiving it as direct communication between different brain regions, each group of neurons simply activates or inhibits other neuronal groups. If these neuronal groups are related to the perceptual experiences we claim to have, such as sounds, shapes, smells, tastes, etc., these experiences would be limited to those specific neuronal groups and would not propagate to other brain regions. However, it is important to note that the activation of a particular neuronal group could trigger the activation of another brain region. In this sense, brain activity would resemble the activity of independent nuclei that influence the activation or inhibition of other nuclei, a topic I will revisit later when introducing the atomic notion.

Furthermore, it is essential to consider what we mean by "information" in this context to avoid misunderstandings. Our senses might capture information that does not manifest consciously, meaning without the subjective experience of what is perceived. For example, we might encounter an image that quickly disappears from our visual field. As previously stated, this could be because the captured information, due to its brevity, does not reach the activation of the neuronal groups related to our identity or sense of being.

Given the ideas previously discussed, the question arises about the existence of the concept of free will, since the notions of "self," "identity," and the conscious realization of actions are determined by the associations our brain establishes. Therefore, they cannot be considered as entities with independent "will," as this would be contradictory.

However, it is possible to propose a different approach to free will that does not imply the absence of causes. Can something like the "self" or my identity truly exist? The answer is yes, but many of these concepts primarily reflect the psychology of the entities that conceive them. If we were to closely analyze many of these concepts, we would find that they could be restructured with different meanings, considering our knowledge of how our mind works.

The question of the existence of free will, according to a certain criterion of the term, might seem absurd, since the "self" itself is the result of a determined process and is subject to causes. If free will implies the absence of determinants, does it make sense to assert that something determined and subject to causes, like the "self," is not determined and not subject to causes? The notions that propose the existence or absence of free will do not recognize that everything produced by our brain and our mind originates in a causal process. The "self" depends on causes, such as the activation of neuronal patterns and the associations that are established. Things have a specific structure, and their behavior is intrinsically linked to this structure.

It is important to emphasize that the existence of the "self" or other mental notions is not being denied; rather, it is a consideration of the true nature of these concepts. Arguing that the "self" does not exist is often based on value judgments that associate the "self" with selfishness or sinfulness, and from there, it is considered a mere illusion. However, this is not the point being made here. The "self" indeed exists but as an entity formed by the specific connections in our brain, which in turn determine our ideas, skills, memories, desires, etc. The individual, as a subject, is real and is constructed from a particular brain with specific characteristics, which influence their behavior. The perception of something implies its existence in some sense, whether as an external phenomenon in the world or as a purely biochemical process, as in the case of hallucinations. In both cases, what is perceived exists at some level.

If we want to create a robot with behavior resembling that of a human, its functioning must be based on the process of association, similar to what we experience as humans. To achieve this, it would require the construction of a material base that allows for the establishment of these associations and the capacity to consolidate them, which is equivalent to the manifestation of memory. Additionally, the robot would need perceptual capabilities similar to ours to acquire information from the environment,

which in turn would allow for the manifestation of certain characteristics considered intrinsic to human experience.

However, some essential aspects of human experience would be excluded in a robot, such as the ability to experience feelings and emotions, the motivation of an organism to determine its actions, or the participation in processes of thought and reflection. These aspects are generated from particular biological structures that involve specific associations. For a robot to manifest these aspects inherent to organisms, like the ability to feel rewards, it would be necessary to find a way for these characteristics to be produced as well. In this sense, a motive or system would be required that associates with the robot's other connections and functions as a driver or activator of a specific set of associations and actions.

Human associations involve integrations that can be linked with emotions. For example, a particular experience might be associated with feelings of joy or sadness. In the human brain, there are structures related to emotions that contribute to what we perceive as an emotional response. This occurs partly through the activation of specific neural patterns that are related to other experiences or elements, such as a particular experience. Associations are established between a given experience and emotions, and this process involves the interaction of specific brain structures. (For more information, see reference 4 in the "References" section at the end of this paper).

Associations related to qualia, that is, the subjective experiences of perceived entities, can also include associations with emotional states and feelings linked to those experiences. This connection can be arbitrary in the sense that an experience can be associated with a specific emotional state due to biochemical activity in the brain that happens randomly, though not without fundamental causes. For example, we might experience a specific emotion, such as fear, when perceiving a particular object, and this association can be established without any immediate environmental reasons.

However, it is also possible for an association to form between a given emotion, like fear, and a situation in the environment that is genuinely threatening to the individual. In this case, the association would not be considered arbitrary, as the manifested emotion would have an apparent purpose, often related to preparing the organism for survival, such as fight or flight.

The manifestation of emotions, both from a subjective perspective and from a physiological-behavioral perspective in response to certain events in the world or environment, is ultimately related to our biology. Rather than being the result of a preconceived purpose, such as preparing us for survival, these emotional manifestations are essentially consequences of biological processes that have developed over the course of evolution.

The experience of feeling fear in a threatening situation, for instance, is not due to the existence of an intrinsic purpose aimed at survival. Instead, these emotions have gradually formed over the evolutionary process due to natural selection. The manifestation of the physiological correlates of emotions and, in our case, the subjective association of these emotions with specific environmental situations, has contributed to the survival of organisms over time. Therefore, these emotional responses do not originate with a predefined purpose, as sometimes thought, but have developed as adaptations that have proven beneficial in terms of survival throughout evolution.

There seems to be a perception that emotions not directly connected to specific environmental situations must originate internally, driven solely by brain biochemistry, without an evident relation to external causes. This type of emotion is sometimes described as "senseless," or reference is made to the presence of a "senseless" mood in the sense that it appears to have no cause related to external reality.

However, it is important to highlight that, ultimately, any emotion, including those that don't seem to have an obvious purpose or a clear cause related to specific goals or objectives, doesn't necessarily originate from a particular purpose or determining cause. In other words, all emotions, even those that don't appear to be linked to specific goals or purposes, are influenced by a range of factors that may be beyond our personal aims and objectives.

Regarding the topic of consciousness, there is a wide range of concepts and phenomena often grouped under the label of "consciousness." These can include attention, memory, knowledge, perception, reflection, and many other related processes and phenomena. It is often said that consciousness involves being aware of something. So, when we talk about consciousness, we refer to a variety of experiences and processes that encompass these areas.

It is relevant to note that the expression "doing something consciously" is sometimes used to denote the idea that consciousness is related to the ability to make decisions or perform actions without external causes, which is often associated with the concept of free will. However, the notion of consciousness encompasses a wide range of aspects and is not necessarily limited to the idea of actions without causes.

For example, when we talk about a person's subjective experiences, such as sounds, images, and the various sensations they experience, we often refer to these as part of their consciousness. These subjective experiences, including qualia, are fundamental elements of what we understand as an individual's consciousness. Essentially, an image, for example, can be composed of various different qualia that together give rise to that specific image.

The phrase "consciousness is consciousness of something" suggests that consciousness does not refer to itself but is directed towards an object of perception or knowledge. In other words, consciousness implies being aware of something, and this relationship establishes two components: the subject who is aware and the object of consciousness. The subject is the one who experiences consciousness, while the object is what one is aware of, perceives, knows, or experiences. Consciousness is the expression of the experience of that something.

This concept is similar to terms like "perceive," "know," or "experience." When we talk about perception, we say we perceive something; when we talk about knowledge, we state that we know something; and when we talk about experience, we imply that we experience something. In all these cases, there is a relationship between a subject who performs the action (perceiving, knowing, experiencing) and an object that is the content of that action.

Referring to that "something" when we talk about consciousness and related concepts, like perception, knowledge, or experience, often leads to these notions becoming intertwined in the concept of consciousness that many people use. Sometimes, we do not make a clear distinction between saying there is consciousness of something and saying that something is experienced, as both expressions point to the idea that consciousness implies a relationship between the conscious subject and the object of their consciousness.

The process of knowledge, similar to consciousness, involves two elements: something that is known and something that knows. This is akin to the process of perception, where there is something that is perceived and something that perceives, thus involving two parts. Additionally, when discussing knowledge, we sometimes refer directly to the matter of knowledge itself. For example, when we ask if someone knows a city, we are inquiring about the accumulation of memories that person has related to that city, that is, about their knowledge. This knowledge results from the consolidation of previous experiences, which implies a connection to the process of memory.

From a neurobiological perspective and in the context of neuronal activation patterns, the two parts, that is, what is known or perceived and what knows or perceives, refer to what activates and what is activated. In the case of perception, this would include external objects to the individual's mind and nervous system that activate specific neuronal patterns in response to observation, hearing, or other forms of sensory interaction. In the context of the nervous system, it is inferred that there must be some entity associated with the manifestation of qualia, that is, subjective experiences, which are the result of an entity that triggers their manifestation.

Consequently, both in perception and knowledge, there is a relationship between what is perceived or known and what perceives or knows. From the perspective of the nervous system, this translates into the activation of specific neural patterns in response to stimulation by external entities, giving rise to the manifestation of subjective experiences.

In future propositions, I will address the issue of qualia, which are the subjective elements that constitute conscious experience within the framework of our nervous system and mental activity. I prefer to refer to these elements as "subjective manifestations" rather than "experiences," as the latter term can lead to confusion, as I will explain in the following propositions. These subjective manifestations are fundamental to an individual's mental activity.

It is important to emphasize that we do not experience something as if we were taking something from the external world and transferring it to the mental realm; rather, these manifestations simply present themselves. We must be precise in our language: what we experience are the manifestations of qualia, which constitute the so-called conscious experience. These manifestations are closely linked to the activation of specific neural groups. Essentially, qualia are entities in themselves, fundamental

components of experience, not containers of content or expressions of something external. In other words, the qualia we perceive are manifestations activated by entities operating outside the mental realm.

The manifestation of qualia gives rise to the forms by which we perceive the existence of a world external to the mental realm. When we talk about knowledge or refer to the act of knowing, we are actually alluding to the activation of specific neural patterns. These activated neural patterns, within the mental context, refer to the qualia, which represent the subjective experience of things, including what we perceive as perceptions and internal states.

As I will point out in the following propositions, when we assert that we are conscious of something in the context of the nervous and mental system, we must be precise about the meaning of that statement. In part, it refers to the fact that certain qualia manifest themselves in a unified manner along with others, including those that contribute to the notion of "self" or personal identity.

The fundamental question is whether there is a conscious entity performing the act of knowing. From my perspective, we should consider that there is a cognitive process performing the act of knowing rather than an entity itself. This process involves the activation of specific neural patterns in the brain. We often assign the term "someone" to this process, which can lead to the perception of a conscious entity.

The logical sequence of this process can be broken down as follows: first, the act of knowing can be related to activities such as perceiving. Perceiving, in turn, refers to the activation of neural patterns in response to external stimuli. This relationship implies that something is activated and something performs the activation: patterns activated by a stimulus or something that activates them.

When we refer to internal states, we observe that something is activated, but not necessarily due to entities in the external world. Then, we come to the concept of "I know," where the "I" seems to be an inference from the process of knowing, which constitutes self-awareness. The notion of "self" encompasses various associated characteristics referring to the entity that knows. However, I believe that the mere manifestation of these characteristics is not sufficient to generate self-awareness. It requires the inference that the existence of something perceived implies the existence of something that knows, which is the manifestation of sensory experience.

While it could be argued that certain patterns contribute to the formation of the "self" by relating to bodily sensations and the sense of bodily unity, these sensations are activations referred to something, like any other sensation. For these to give rise to self-awareness, we must infer that these bodily sensations manifest due to the existence of something perceiving them. This adds the association that the bodily sensation directly refers to the conscious entity experiencing those sensations.

To demonstrate self-awareness in an entity, it is necessary to observe a response that implies the capacity to experience perceptions and recognize that there is an entity (oneself) performing this act of knowing. Since it is possible to simulate these responses (such as memorizing and repeating a language without understanding it), it is crucial that the system has limited information and that responses reflecting self-awareness are based on the entity's learning. This allows us to rule out the possibility that the behavior or response is merely a simulation devoid of true knowledge of the experience. This aspect is particularly relevant when dealing with artificial intelligence that is claimed to possess consciousness.

When we consider entities external to a subject's mental realm, the perception of something refers to an entity that exists outside the mental realm or within the process of knowing itself. In this context, when we talk about "consciousness of something," we mean that this "something" is related to an entity external to the mental realm acting as a stimulus. This clarification becomes especially relevant when dealing with entities residing within the subject, such as internal states, emotions, moods, etc. When we say we experience an emotion, we do not think of the emotion as something external to us, but we refer to what triggers or activates that emotion, while the emotion itself is the result of such activation.

However, in the context of the mental, the question arises as to what this "something" refers to. When we talk about perceiving something in the mental realm, we refer to what is activated, that is, what manifests as mental content. We say that there is something being perceived, and something that perceives relates to the patterns activated in our brain. These activated neural patterns represent the manifestation of that "something" in the mental context that is said to be perceived (we refer to this "something" at the mental level, which is not the same as what acts as a stimulus). If the activity of these activated neural patterns relates to the qualia, that "something" known or perceived in the mental context refers to the qualia. In this sense, what one is

conscious of, in the mental realm, refers to the manifestation of the qualia, such as images, sounds, and various sensations.

The relationship between what is activated, what is said to be perceived in the mental context, and qualia has also contributed to concepts such as perception, knowledge, or experience converging into the concept of consciousness.

The central idea I want to highlight here is that when we talk about "consciousness of something," we are referring to the perception of specific qualia. This perception of qualia relates to our sense of identity, as we focus on those qualia that we integrate into our conscious experience and that ultimately contribute to defining who we are. In other words, consciousness of something refers to the unified manifestation of certain qualia, especially those related to our identity and with which we identify.

Talking about conscious experience from this perspective implies that our consciousness is composed of the joint perception of these qualia, which form our identity. We place our sense of identity in relation to these specific qualia. This applies to each individual, as what the subject is in mental terms relates to certain qualia that make up their conscious experience.

If these qualia refer to images, sounds, and other perceptual aspects but do not refer to a bodily dimension or continuity provided by certain sensations, for example, there would be no sense of identity or "self." The "self" is also part of what the subject is and relates to certain qualia that contribute to that identity.

Under these considerations, the question "who is conscious of something?" can be confusing unless it is used to inquire among several subjects which one of them experiences a particular conscious quale. In that case, the question would refer to which of the subjects is, in mental terms, a certain quale. Consciousness, as I have outlined, relates to identity and refers to the group of qualia that one is, in a sense of identity. There may be other qualia that are unconscious since they are not part of one's identity and, therefore, are not experienced consciously.

The phrase "self-awareness" becomes imprecise in light of what I have explained previously. Talking about the presence or absence of "qualia" that make up the perception of oneself is confusing. Additionally, it's important to clarify that when we speak of "awareness of something," we are not referring solely to awareness itself, but to the awareness of a particular object or phenomenon. In fact, integration implies

awareness of something, but not just anything; it is the awareness of being oneself. This is the true essence of consciousness.

A fundamental concept we must address to understand what many mean when they talk about consciousness is the notion of "qualia," which refers to the subjective experience associated with the patterns of activation generated by perception, for example. Consciousness involves a criterion of knowledge related to what is activated through the act of knowing. This is closely related to the internal states we experience, that is, the patterns of activation that constitute "qualia." How do these "qualia" manifest? Why are there sometimes activations of patterns without the presence of "qualia"?

Consider that the brain, in its essence, presents a fundamental characteristic: the atomization of neuronal activation patterns. This means that each activation pattern does not convey its intrinsic nature as if it were copied and transferred to another brain region. Instead, one pattern simply activates another pattern. Each of these patterns represents a specific experience and, in a certain sense, can be considered a universe in itself.

Even when disregarding the interaction between different patterns, the neurons that make up each pattern simply activate other neurons. The brain does not acquire material from external reality in a conventional sense; instead, it merely activates patterns. In the process of perception, which is based on an external reality, what happens is the activation of patterns as a result of an entity outside the mind that triggers them. However, our brains do not take any material from this external entity; there is only the activation of patterns.

Essentially, our brains are composed of independent activation nuclei that only activate each other. The common notion of sending and receiving information does not apply in this context. When a letter is sent to another person, it is perceived as an act of transferring a tangible substance. In contrast, in the brain, each nucleus activates another but does not send its essence or information in the conventional sense of sending and receiving, as happens with a letter. Each nucleus, in turn, consists of small groups of neurons that also activate each other, without a complete transfer of information in the usual sense, as with a letter. The elements that make up a specific activation pattern can participate in multiple distinct patterns, but what happens is simply activation.

It could be argued that the manifestation of "qualia" cannot be reduced to just a few neurons but rather to the activation of numerous neurons. However, what actually occurs is the activation of discrete points that only activate other points, without any exchange of information in the classical sense of communication. The connections between these elements do not transmit information but facilitate further activations and structural changes in the neurons.

The question arises as to how, under the activation of discrete and isolated elements that function as individual universes, a unified conscious experience emerges. How is it possible that activation patterns confined to separate regions of the brain give rise to a conscious experience where various "qualia" manifest simultaneously? Even at less complex levels, how can a set of dispersed neurons generate a pattern corresponding to a specific "qualia"? It is plausible that the activity in the neurons and the internal space between them is a key factor, but it might require other elements as well. And how does this activation pattern relate to the subjective experience of a "qualia"?

The atomistic conception of the brain is essential when addressing the problem of consciousness and "qualia" in the quest to understand our identity. The notion of the atomic is not limited to the brain alone but extends to other entities that make up reality. However, this aspect becomes significantly important when trying to elucidate how consciousness is possible and, ultimately, define what we are. Since we cannot be a multiplicity of diverse entities simultaneously, we must necessarily be something in particular, a specific unity. Nevertheless, the brain is intrinsically diverse and complex in its structure.

Although our body is composed of a multitude of cells, which in turn are made up of various elements, we do not face fundamental difficulties in explaining phenomena like muscle contraction, as we can analyze the individual components involved. However, explaining processes related to consciousness is notoriously more complex, as it seems that the existence of distinct and separate elements poses a challenge. This is because, in the case of consciousness, the manifestation of a "qualia" for an individual entails the identification of a particular and unique entity in terms of its identity.

Thus, the problem of the unity or uniqueness of the entity that we are in terms of our identity arises. The question is: what constitutes this unitary entity? What can be considered a unity concerning our identity? This issue becomes highly relevant for understanding the nature of a "quale."

To illustrate this problem, we can refer to the previously mentioned experiment involving split-brain patients. In this context, we cannot simultaneously identify with the activity of both hemispheres, as they are separate and differentiated entities. We must necessarily be one entity or the other, not both at the same time. If we consider ourselves to be a particular "qualia," this could not imply being diverse entities simultaneously. There must be an entity that constitutes what we call reality and represents our identity. This entity must refer to a single thing, as we cannot be multiple distinct things simultaneously concerning our identity.

It is surprising that this problem has not been widely discussed in the field of mind-body research, or at least not in the specific terms presented here. Nevertheless, it is an essential problem for understanding "qualia," consciousness, and the mind as a whole. To properly address this issue, we must first understand consciousness and "qualia" as something that implies being a particular entity. Moreover, we must consider that this entity must be unitary.

This notion also leads us to consider that, to achieve the unification of "qualia" themselves, there must be something unitary that allows the joint and unified manifestation of these dispersed and separate entities. This is similar to the case of the activity of both hemispheres in split-brain patients, where there must be something considered the same entity, a unit, based on which we can identify ourselves as conscious subjects.

When we identify with a particular "qualia," it must refer to something that can be considered a unit. At the same time, the question of the unification of different "qualia" implies that this unit can refer to various "qualia." This unification based on something unitary may involve certain mechanisms or processes, as will be detailed later.

The main issue regarding the unification of "qualia" lies in the impossibility of being different, separate, and distinct entities at the same time. This is consistent with the problem of unity or uniqueness mentioned earlier. Similarly, if we assert that we are a particular "qualia," it must refer to a unit, something that can be considered a unique entity, as we cannot position ourselves as conscious subjects in relation to multiple entities simultaneously.

Ultimately, regardless of the challenges posed by this issue, it remains a fact, in my opinion, that we are the "qualia." This implies that we can understand consciousness

and being conscious by following the previously established criteria, and that, for the manifestation of a "qualia," it is necessary to be a specific entity that relates to that "qualia" as its sense of identity.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this second part and in previous and subsequent propositions, brain activity, which involves changes at the neuronal level and in the space between neurons, has been used as a reference point in my argument to develop various propositions. However, it is important to highlight that, although this neuronal activity is useful in the context of these arguments, I do not necessarily consider it to constitute a unitary entity by itself.

When we consider neuronal activity, the question arises whether it can really be conceived as a unit. It may be premature to assert that the unity lies in brain activity itself, even though I mention it in various propositions, or that the "qualia" are directly related to brain activity. In developing certain arguments, it is possible that the unity refers to a product of this activity rather than the activity itself. Perhaps not everything can be reduced to neuronal activity in terms of what constitutes our universe.

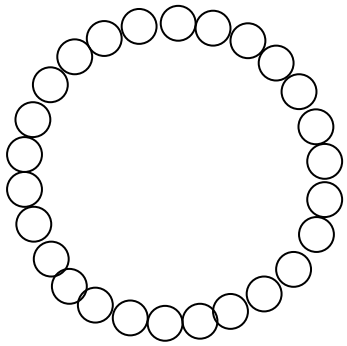
It is relevant to note that, from my perspective, neuronal activity represents a process involving various distinct structures and entities (as noted in the first paragraphs regarding processes). Neuronal activity refers to different states of these structures, which are separate and distinct from each other. Furthermore, the process itself is not the cause of something; it is the material structures that relate to causes. Although this point might not be the most central in this context, I consider it important to remember.

There may be a unitary entity at the neuronal level, and perhaps I am not recognizing it. Maybe there is something continuous and unitary at this level. However, regardless of this, the essence of my argument remains unchanged: we would be that unitary entity as a sense of identity, and from that unity, the "qualia" manifest for an individual. In other words, we are the "qualia," and consciousness relates to the "qualia" that we are. If the unity comes from a result of brain activity, then it would suffice to replace brain activity or neuronal patterns with this unity when referring to what we are and the "qualia," as the fundamental postulates would not be altered. For the mental to exist, in my opinion, the presence of something unitary is necessary. If this were not the case, it might not be necessary to consider anything beyond brain activity, as long as this does not refer to something unitary.

The problem of uniqueness or unity in terms of identity does not apply to brain functions and processes, as we can explain the functioning of these processes based on the interaction of their components. For instance, when considering the pattern of neuronal activity generated by observing the color red, we can understand how this pattern activates other patterns and how, based on the totality of these patterns, specific responses and behaviors are generated. At the brain level, it is not necessary to invoke a unitary entity to explain how responses or behaviors are obtained in response to perceived stimuli.

However, when it comes to explaining the subjective experience of such perceptions, which refers to the patterns of responses generated by events like observing the color red, a challenge arises. As I mention, in this context, we need to speak of an identity with something, since mere interaction between parts is not sufficient to understand the subjective experience of consciousness.

The example of a circle and small circles is useful for visualizing the idea of being something and the question of identity. In this representation, we see that we cannot speak of an identity with the whole, that is, the total circle formed by the small circles, as this whole is an abstraction, and in reality, only the small circles exist effectively. Each small circle represents an individual entity, and identity cannot be attributed to the set of circles but must be considered in relation to each small circle separately:



The physical identity can be associated with an individual element, such as one of the small circles, but not with the entire circle that forms simultaneously. The whole circle is an abstraction that arises in the act of observation, where we perceive each small circle independently. We might ask whether consciousness operates similarly, as

an observer of the brain's patterns that integrates various parts. However, this analogy poses significant challenges due to the brain's atomistic nature.

The idea of an "observing" part in the brain could only be activated by other parts and would not receive information from them in terms of what they represent. The receiving part would have to mimic or reflect every aspect of cognition without adding anything new that couldn't have occurred previously. In other words, this receiving part wouldn't contribute anything additional to the experience beyond the integration of previous states. Furthermore, this wouldn't address the problem of "qualia," as it wouldn't explain why integrated activity involves the subjective experience of "qualia."

Nevertheless, a pertinent question arises: couldn't we also consider ourselves as multiple entities at the same time? From a materialist perspective focused on the brain, the answer would be yes, since the brain houses various functions simultaneously. However, from the standpoint of our subjective experience, we experience ourselves as a unified entity. When we identify with something, we experience a unity of consciousness, a wholeness that constitutes a singular entity.

When we try to put ourselves in another person's place from our own consciousness and try to discern which material aspect of that individual we should identify with, in a sense of identity, we face the complexity of the brain, which is presumably the seat of consciousness but does not represent a single entity. Here lies the challenge and the practical impossibility of reducing the mind and consciousness to the brain. Consequently, speaking of identification with neural activity, as we are doing, serves as an explanation but does not constitute a definitive conclusion.

On the other hand, it is essential to distinguish between consciousness as self-knowledge, which implies self-awareness in a broad sense, and the subjective experience of aspects of consciousness. These two aspects are not identical. Theories of consciousness that equate integrated information with subjective experience may be questionable, as they might require a better delineation of the term "consciousness." The mere integration of information at the brain level does not necessarily imply subjective experience. Given the atomistic nature of the brain and what has been explained earlier, for example, the idea of an "observer" experience within the brain, where a concept of an integrated whole (like the large circle in the earlier example) is conceived, does not seem feasible. The integration of information at the brain level is ultimately a

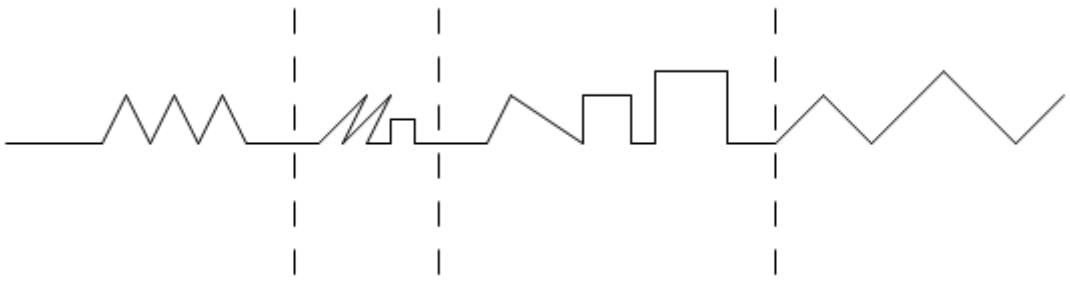
simultaneous activity sustained by biological connections and does not necessarily imply a conscious experience in the sense of "insight" or elevated self-awareness.

If it is suggested that independent neuronal activities without connections in terms of brain activity refer to an integrated manifestation of "qualia," then the mental, the "qualia," should be considered a distinct entity from neuronal activity. This is because we cannot be distinct entities at the same time, and the manifestation of "qualia" in relation to oneself refers to being something specific in terms of identity. However, it is important to highlight that even with active neuronal connections between groups of neurons that refer to "qualia," the brain activity itself would not necessarily be equivalent to the "qualia," nor would it imply a manifestation of "qualia" in relation to oneself if it is argued that one is that activity.

It is important to avoid confusion and recognize that the fact that different "qualia" are manifested jointly and in a unified manner at a given moment does not imply that we can be different things at the same time, that is, different "qualia." It also does not suggest that, due to the existence of different "qualia," we are not the "qualia," but another entity that is a unity.

The "qualia" that are manifested jointly and in a unified manner at a given moment all refer to the same entity. These "qualia" point to being something unitary, continuous, and a unity. The unified manifestation occurs because all the "qualia" relate to the same thing. It does not imply that we are different entities at the same time. We can divide that unity into segments, and each segment can refer to a particular "qualia." However, each "qualia" will still refer to the same entity, that is, something unitary.

Consider the following abstract scheme as an illustrative example:



Each segment of the line refers to a variation of the same entity: the line. Similarly, each "qualia" represents the same entity (like the line in the example), but the particular structures that comprise what we consider a unity—our sense of identity—account for the different manifestations of "qualia" we experience, such as colors, sounds, etc. However, all these "qualia" are the same entity. The joint and unified manifestation of various "qualia" refers to a single entity, which is what we are in terms of identity. We are the same entity, as a sense of identity, and each segment of that entity could refer to a particular manifestation, but that does not mean we are different entities at the same time. It is all about the same kind of entity, in a continuum, an integration, or a unity.

The challenging and still uncertain aspect pertains to how brain activity, for instance, certain neuronal patterns, results in the manifestation of "qualia," that is, in a personal subjective experience. In other words, while "qualia" is the activity as a sense of identity, also in relation to one's own identity (which is the key point of my argument), it remains to be explored what characteristics of brain or neuronal activity cause this activity, being the same in terms of identity, to generate "qualia." This aspect can be studied more easily and directly through neuroscience.

One encounters various definitions of consciousness. It is notable that the term consciousness or experience often specifically refers to qualia, that is, to the manifestation of qualia, even if this reference is not always explicit. In contrast, self-awareness implies an inference based on perception, as I have previously established. However, for self-awareness to exist, there must be a notion of something that perceives, or more precisely, something that constitutes the manifestation of what we call perception. This requirement presupposes the prior existence of activation patterns that can be integrated, and it is important to emphasize that these activation patterns, as I will discuss shortly, imply qualia.

From the perspective of the concept of consciousness I have previously outlined, degrees of consciousness in relation to qualia cannot be discerned. One is either conscious of something or not; what can vary is the level of attention given to something that is already conscious.

The mental is intrinsically related to the cerebral, although what constitutes a person's mind is inaccessible to others because each individual possesses a unique brain. The central premise here is that if we consider our true identity to reside in brain activity, which encompasses not only the notion of self or personal identity but also all

the experiences one has at a given moment, such as emotions and perceptions, then we would need to replicate, in a certain sense, a person's brain in another individual for their subjective experiences to manifest.

It is often argued that what we observe in a brain scan, such as a functional MRI, does not directly correspond to the subjective experience of the person being observed. This has led to the assertion that the mental is not equivalent to the brain, as neuronal activity patterns do not directly translate into emotions, images, sounds, etc. However, this reasoning is not necessarily valid. The critical point is that the neuronal patterns activated in the observer's brain are not identical to the neuronal patterns of the subject being observed. For emotions, memories, and other experiences to manifest in the observer, it would be necessary for the observer to establish, so to speak, a connection with the neuronal activity of the observed subject. If the observer were, in essence, that neuronal activity, then emotions and memories would manifest in their experience, as what we consider the mind would be defined by the unified manifestation of qualia that constitute the notion of self and personal identity, as well as various perceptions.

In this context, we could argue that we are the activity of neuronal patterns, as long as this activity is directly related to qualia. Subjective manifestations in an individual exist because what that individual is, in the previously explained sense, refers to the activity of neuronal patterns. Therefore, we could assert that we are, ultimately, the activity of neuronal patterns, and the perceived discrepancy between the brain activity of an observed subject and that of an observing subject does not necessarily refute the equivalence between the mental and the cerebral.

For qualia to manifest, certain brain activity is necessary, and it seems that the activity of just a few neurons wouldn't be enough for this purpose. Additionally, for qualia to manifest in an individual's experience, it is essential that the individual, in terms of identity, is that brain activity related to the qualia. The crucial difference between an observer and the subject undergoing a functional MRI is that the observer is not identical, in terms of brain activity, to the person being observed. Therefore, the observer does not experience the same qualia that the observed subject manifests.

A specific quale manifests as such for a subject by virtue of this sense of identity. Although one might equate brain activity with certain qualia and create a representation of what the observed subject experiences, observing this is not equivalent to experiencing the so-called experience of that image which the observed subject has.

It is important to consider that neuronal activity may not be what we use as a basis to establish our sense of identity, which will depend on how we define a unit, as I will discuss in the following paragraphs. Nonetheless, there is a need to be the neuronal activity itself for emotions, images, memories, and other experiences to manifest, because when we observe neuronal activity, it does not seem to be directly equivalent to these subjective manifestations.

Therefore, there exists an entity that forms part of our perception of reality, and this entity is what we truly are in terms of our identity. If we consider that brain activity is this entity, then being that brain activity, i.e., identifying with it in a sense of identity, relates to the dimension of qualia. In other words, the manifestation of qualia occurs when one experiences oneself as the brain activity in question. When we simply observe that brain activity without identifying with it, we perceive the activity itself, but the qualia do not manifest in our experience. Thus, qualia would inherently be the brain activity, but their manifestation becomes evident to one to the extent that one becomes, in terms of sense of identity, that specific brain activity.

It is crucial to recognize that, in addition to perceiving different elements that make up reality, we are also something in particular that is part of that reality. What we truly are, in terms of our identity, could refer, for example, to brain activity. Therefore, when we identify with that brain activity, qualia manifest in our experience.

If qualia are the patterns of activity in terms of identity, then that is what we would be. Within this discussion, it is crucial to differentiate between two key concepts: the "self" and the "ego." The self encompasses all aspects that refer to oneself, including bodily sensations, memories, notions about personal identity, and more. On the other hand, the ego refers to the dimension of identity from which we perceive ourselves, and this dimension is related to qualia.

The ego, in this context, is considered a part of the mind that is more extensive and encompasses more than the self. It includes all our conscious perceptions, thoughts, and feelings at any given moment. If we understand that qualia are patterns of neuronal activity, then we are that neuronal activity in terms of our identity. When one identifies with this neuronal activity—that is, when one assumes that what one is in mental terms refers to this activity—one experiences the manifestation of qualia. Conversely, in the absence of that identification, certain aspects that do not generate qualia under other circumstances will do so in the presence of this identification.

It is important to highlight that, while the self and the body are fundamental components of what we are, the specific identity in terms of our sense of ego is related to qualia. In summary, when we identify with the neuronal activity underlying our conscious experience, qualia manifest in our perception, allowing us to experience and understand our identity more fully in the context of the mind.

The neuronal activity that one represents in relation to their identity implies the manifestation of qualia. This manifestation is exclusive to the activity that one is at that moment; any other activity will not result in the same manifestation. An illustrative example is a person who at one moment is unable to perceive the color red, but later can. In this transition, the person incorporates a new pattern into their identity, which becomes a fundamental element of their subjective experience.

It is important to emphasize that knowledge is not acquired separately or independently of identity. More precisely, one becomes the activity that refers to "red" at the moment the perception of the color occurs. It is not about experiencing qualia but about manifesting and being them. In other words, we are the manifestation of qualities like pleasure or pain; these experiences are not merely simple sensations but become intrinsic elements of what we are in terms of our unified identity.

The evolution of life has progressed from simple connections between sensations and motor responses to the complexity that characterizes human beings. While we retain reflexes involving sensory-motor relationships, our complexity is evident in our ability to organize our behavior around various elements rather than relying solely on reflexes. However, it's important to note that many of these elements are still linked to perception, as our rich associations mostly derive from the perception of elements outside our mental realm, along with considering internal states like emotions, rewards, and moods. Essentially, we are machines capable of interacting with reality, understanding, and perceiving entities outside our mind. This process involves the activation of neuronal groups, the storage of these perceptions through the consolidation of neuronal connections, and the subsequent use of these memories to guide our behavior.

The notion of experience is often associated with the act of experiencing and perceiving. However, talking about having a subjective experience can be confusing. I prefer to express that there is a manifestation of qualia, a subjective manifestation, as I will explain in the following propositions.

To avoid significant confusion, it is essential to distinguish between experience in a general sense and the concept of qualia. Often, similarities can be found between the notions of consciousness and perception, as they share common criteria, related terms, and similar expressions. This has led to misunderstandings, especially when interpreting qualia as the results of experience or perception, instead of understanding them as intrinsic elements of these processes.

When we talk about perceiving in the context of the nervous system, it refers to the activation of certain aspects in response to stimuli. However, it is fundamental to emphasize that qualia should not be considered the result of qualia manifestation due to the activation of something. Qualia are more of a component of the process of perception or apprehension, in the sense that they are what gets activated. They are not merely the result of the process. Therefore, we must distinguish between the act of perceiving (according to certain criteria) and the manifestation of qualia.

It is important to clarify that in the context of the nervous system, the term "experiencing" or "perceiving" implies the activation of certain components, both those being activated and those performing the activation. The process encompasses both aspects. However, the subjective aspect of perception, that is, the qualia, refers to the final component: what is activated. The qualia is an inherent element of the process of perceiving or apprehending (when perception involves qualia), not merely a result of that process. However, qualia are often mistakenly interpreted as a result of the act of perceiving, leading to the idea that a type of "experimentation" is required for what is being activated.

Moreover, saying that qualia are related to the subjective experience of things can be confusing if we understand "things" as entities that activate subjective manifestations. In reality, the subjective experience of things is more an experience induced by certain qualia. In the mental realm, the "things" we say we experience are, in fact, qualia; they are subjective manifestations. Speaking in this context of having a subjective experience of "red" can be confusing, as "red" itself is a subjective experience. It would be like saying one has a subjective experience of a subjective experience.

Therefore, in my view, qualia are the entities that constitute what we commonly call conscious experience. They are various subjective manifestations that, collectively, give rise to images, tactile sensations, and other phenomena related to conscious

experience. A conscious experience can be the manifestation of several qualia or even refer to a specific quale.

As I previously mentioned, there is often confusion in considering that the manifestation of qualia is the result of the process of perceiving or apprehending, as if perceiving gives rise to the manifestation of qualia as something separate. In reality, the quale is an integral component of the process of perceiving or apprehending, not something generated separately as a result of some kind of experimentation or act of perceiving.

The analogy of a camera is useful for understanding the distinction between perception and the manifestation of qualia. In the case of an image on photographic film, one could say we experience something by observing it, but the image itself does not have the capacity to observe. Similarly, the patterns of neuronal activation generated when observing an image in our brain cannot experience themselves. This is where the confusion lies: it is often thought that the manifestation of qualia is the result of some kind of experimentation, when in fact it is not.

In our nervous system, when we talk about experiencing, perceiving, or apprehending, we are referring to a process that involves two parts: the activated pattern and something that activates it. However, the manifestation of qualia, which relates to the activity of these neuronal patterns, does not require these patterns to experience themselves. The manifestation of qualia can simply be the expression of the activity of a neuronal pattern without that pattern needing to experience itself.

Ultimately, the neuronal pattern associated with perception is simply activated, and this activation can lead to the manifestation of qualia. It is not necessary for that neuronal pattern to experience itself separately for the manifestation of qualia to occur, just as it is not necessary for an image on photographic film to observe itself for us to experience the image by looking at it.

Many dualist notions that invoke a separate entity experiencing or perceiving various sensations, based on brain activity, may stem from the confusion of considering the manifestation of qualia as an independent result of the process of experiencing. The key here is to clearly distinguish between the elements that make up the activation process—that is, what is being activated and what is activating, which would be the experiencing, apprehending, or perceiving—and the qualia as an element of the process

of experiencing. When neuronal activity pertains to qualia, the qualia becomes an intrinsic part of the experiential process, not a result separate from perception or the act of experiencing.

The idea of invoking an entity or a specific place from which consciousness arises may derive from this fundamental confusion, as it seeks to explain how a separate entity can experience qualia, when in fact, qualia is an inherent manifestation of the perceptual process and does not require a separate entity to be experienced. In summary, the key to clarifying these dualist notions lies in understanding that qualia is an integral part of the experiential process and not an independent result of it.

Ultimately, a "quale" is manifested due to the activation of a neuronal pattern. However, it is crucial to emphasize that this pattern does not experience itself. In the context of the nervous system, saying that a pattern always experiences itself does not necessarily imply an infinite number of patterns mutually activating each other. In this context, the experience of a pattern suggests that another pattern is activated, and if the pattern activation process is closed, we might say that a pattern always experiences itself. This could be achieved through feedback, where one pattern activates another, which in turn reactivates the first.

However, the question arises whether this contributes in any way to explaining subjective experience, what we commonly call "quale." It is important not to confuse these notions with our traditional ideas of perception, where the senses seem to capture or perceive an entity external to the subject. In the context of the nervous system, perception does not refer to this process of taking in or incorporating.

Instead, neural patterns function differently. They don't "take" anything from other patterns or copy each other like sending and receiving a letter. Each pattern is a universe in itself, following an atomic notion, and doesn't transmit information to the next. For example, if a neural pattern represents a specific image, saying that another pattern "captures" or "experiences" it simply means that the second pattern is activated by the first. Nothing of what the first pattern represents is transferred to the second, as mentioned earlier in relation to the atomic notion.

In this sense, the question arises as to why we would need another pattern to talk about the existence of "qualia." If the last pattern refers to the same image as the first pattern, why do we need an additional pattern to manifest "qualia"? If this last pattern

doesn't add any element to the manifestation of "qualia," wouldn't the first pattern be enough?

To avoid confusion with our conventional conceptions of the process of perceiving, experiencing, and knowing, let's reconsider the notion of "knowing." In this context, knowing involves the activation of neural patterns and something that activates these patterns, like entities external to the mental realm, for example. Talking about experiencing what is activated, in the context of our nervous system, simply means that what is being activated is something that, in turn, activates another set of patterns that end up being activated.

Setting aside neural patterns, we can imagine that, like the image in a movie, the eye, meaning what is involved in observation, does not perceive itself. It's as if there is no subjective experience of itself. However, if the eye looks at a mirror with its reflection, an experience of the eye itself is generated. Applying this analogy to the context of neural patterns, we could say that a pattern representing a perception could experience that perception if there was another pattern also representing the same perception and connected in a way that resembles a reflection. However, in the nervous system, this approach doesn't hold.

We shouldn't confuse ourselves with the way we commonly think about perception or capturing things. In the brain, that other pattern would merely activate the first in the same way that an external entity does. It would essentially be the same, that is, the first pattern would be reactivated by the other pattern in the same way it was originally activated by the external entity. So, why would we need that second pattern if the first is already activated from the beginning? Returning to the previously mentioned notion, where the brain operates with an "atomic" notion, where each pattern is like a universe in itself. Within this framework, it becomes simpler to talk about the manifestation of "qualia" based on the activation of specific neural groups, where the image represents the neural activation, or consequently, what we conceive as the sense of identity.

Another significant aspect is attention, which influences the manifestation of "qualia". However, we must understand that there are different levels of attention for what we perceive, which involves the participation of brain mechanisms related to activation patterns. Sometimes, we mistakenly confuse consciousness with attention. This also happens when we consider subjective states like mood, humor, or what we call "altered states of consciousness" induced by certain substances, such as drugs.

These states refer to how the brain and its biochemistry operate at a particular moment. A substance can modify the way we perceive something. Additionally, it is interesting to frequently observe that brain biochemistry at a given moment can influence what we think.

The concept of consciousness often generates confusion, as it encompasses various processes. However, many times when we talk about consciousness, we are actually referring to "qualia". It is important to highlight that since "qualia" underlie other processes, we often do not clearly distinguish these different phenomena.

We can only talk about the activation of units, neural units, and electrical activity. The notion of "qualia" would be intrinsically related to this process, or possibly a product of this process. Apparently, a single neuron would not be enough to generate what we know as the experience of colors, for example. Neural patterns can be activated in response to the activation of other patterns, and this activation should be sufficient for the manifestation of "qualia". The associations I mentioned earlier, in the brain context, simply mean that the activation of one neural pattern leads to the activation of another pattern, which supports the idea that meaning is based on the activity of independent neural nuclei.

The complete experience of something depends on the sum of individual elements, and each one contributes to the overall experience, as in the case of an image. Each "pixel" of that image could correspond to the activity of multiple neurons, representing a particular "qualia". As associations become more complex, it means that the activation of groups of neurons leading to the activation of other groups becomes more numerous and extensive. Although it is difficult to express, neurons, considered individually and collectively in large numbers, constitute what we are, the mental aspect of the person, and perhaps not just any neuron. In short, we could say that "we are the neuronal activity".

It seems that we do not experience "qualia" in relation to motor processes; that is, we do not know how the process of our movements occurs, we simply perceive their consequences. However, it is important to consider that we also do not fully understand how we remember a particular word, for example. We know that we are thinking about it, but the word eventually surfaces in our consciousness without detailed knowledge of the underlying process. This latter aspect could be related to the organization of the brain, which operates in an "atomic" manner, so to speak. We are aware of the

independent neural nuclei that involve "qualia", but not of the activity that arises between their connections, which prevents us from fully determining how we come to remember a word we just recalled.

It is interesting to observe that everything related to the sensory seems to imply the existence of "qualia": muscle tension, center of gravity, spatial location, images, sounds, etc. The notion of "qualia" is intricately related to perception, and since perception is related to neuronal activity, the question arises as to why the activity of motor neurons does not represent a manifestation of "qualia."

This issue could be linked to the very nature of neurons and how they are organized in the brain. Alternatively, it could be related to the fact that "qualia" often refer to experiences, as we tend to express in our language, and these experiences are related to sensations and perceptions, which are differentiated functions from motor functions. Perhaps we include within the category of sensation and perception everything that involves "qualia" and use the term experience. For some reason, there may be no "qualia" related to the motor functions, but this is not a certainty.

A possible answer could lie in the previously mentioned example of not fully understanding how we remember a word. We are aware of the elements involved but not of their connections. This suggests that the nature of the connections could be different for motor activity. Maybe we are aware of the intention to move an arm, which is an element, but the rest is related to the connections of that neuronal group and its activity in relation to the rest of the brain.

It is important to consider that what is of a motor nature may simply not be part of our identity, but it could still manifest "qualia" in the sense of identity with that action. There could be a dimension of sensations associated with motor functions, in addition to the processes that lead to movement.

Think about how there are manifestations of "qualia" that are not necessarily related to the senses or perceptions, such as internal states, like a mood, for example. Couldn't there be manifestations of "qualia" for motor functions in the same sense, or is this a less appropriate example? It seems that this falls on how one describes their experience. Through language, we might say that there is an experience of the motor functions, in the same way we describe experiencing internal states, such as joy, euphoria, or sadness.

The difference between conscious and unconscious states regarding the specific activity of neuronal patterns can be related to a multitude of factors. One distinction might be the "intensity" of neuron activation, which we could characterize in various ways, such as the quantity and frequency of action potentials, for example. However, differentiating between conscious and unconscious processes based on neuronal activity might be too simplistic. As we will explore below, it is possible that there are "qualia" considered unconscious simply because they are not integrated into the set of "qualia" we focus on to define our identity.

Regarding the identity relationship between the mind and the brain, it is important to remember that without the brain, there is no mind; the mind is intrinsically related to the brain. However, it is crucial not to interpret this relationship too literally. For example, we should not expect to literally see colors and shapes when observing different groups of neuronal patterns and their activity together, as if looking at three lines joined together to see a triangle. Colors and shapes are not what we see in brain activity. It is a mistake to conclude, as mentioned earlier, that brain activity and "qualia" are two distinct entities.

In terms of identity, neuronal patterns are, in fact, the "qualia." It may require a certain level of brain activity or a set of activated patterns to manifest a "quale," but the essential point is that this overall activity would be the "quale." However, for a "quale" to manifest based on that activity for an individual, it is necessary that the individual essentially be that neuronal activity itself.

Our understanding of these aspects will continue to evolve as we associate which patterns and what types of activity are related to various manifestations of "qualia." We should not expect, however, to directly observe colors or explain "qualia" by observing brain activity, as to do so, we would need to adopt a sense of identity with that neuronal activity, as we would essentially be that activity.

We often use the term "experience," but we know this subjective manifestation is incommunicable. When we perceive something, we are not taking another person's brain and absorbing it in some way to experience their subjective manifestation. As I mentioned earlier, we wouldn't say that a person "experiences" or "captures" a "quale"; rather, the "quale" simply manifests. The notion that the mental is subjectively experienced by the subject itself can create confusion.

The idea that one "experiences" might refer to the fact that the "quale" resides in one as an organism, as a subject. However, the idea that there is a "self" that undergoes this experience relates to the unified manifestation of the "qualia." An inference or association is made about the need for something to be the manifestation of the "qualia." The "self" or identity would be related to the unified manifestation of the "qualia." In reality, everything concerning the notion of the "self" would be based on the "qualia," and a unified manifestation of these is required for the "self" to be coherent; otherwise, the "self" would be fragmented.

Saying that the self perceives or accounts for the qualia can create confusion, given that the self itself is constituted as an expression of various qualia. The qualia represent the foundation, while the self is configured as the mere manifestation of this variety of qualia, meaning the self consists of qualia, which in turn are composed of certain interconnected elements (considering that a quale involves specific activity of multiple neurons and neuronal patterns) capable of activating other interconnections. In this sense, as will be addressed in subsequent propositions, talking about something unconscious could equate to talking about qualia that are not associated with those that constitute the notion of self and that are an integral part of our identity. However, the unconscious would not necessarily be something completely different from the qualia, but rather a manifestation of qualia that are not integrated into the so-called self. Therefore, the previous notion of considering conscious and unconscious processes based solely on electrical activity might be overly simplistic, as the form of such activity represents only one of the dimensions that need to be considered to discern between the conscious and the unconscious.

However, the existence of neuronal activity that does not involve the presence of qualia has been proposed. Could this be attributed to the specific nature of the joint activity of these neurons? Why does it seem that only neuronal activity related to sensory aspects incorporates qualia, as previously asserted? While motor neurons and their functions seem to operate in a domain of non-qualia, which we might call "unconscious." Could this suggest that we are, in a certain sense, only sensory neurons and their activity, and nothing more?

This perspective raises the possibility that there are qualia in our brain that we do not experience in the sense that they do not manifest along with other qualia related to our sensations and the associations that give rise to the notion of the "self." An

intriguing aspect is that motor neurons are not linked to the representation of the reality they activate; rather, they are related to the connections towards the muscles. Could it be that qualia are linked to specific neuronal activity, such as that produced in the sensory realm, but not to other activities, such as those related to movement? However, is the activity genuinely different in each case? It is possible that certain activities involve qualia, and from that, the next question would be about identity. For a quale to manifest in an activity, it would be necessary that this activity or what unifies the activity, as mentioned in the initial proposition of this chapter, be the subject. Consequently, it could be that although there are qualia associated with certain activities, we are not aware of them, which could provide an answer to the questions raised earlier.

However, a problematic issue arises in relation to the atomic conception of the brain. If the quale is of a cerebral nature and we consider its manifestation to be atomic, that is, only activating other manifestations of qualia, then the possibility of experiencing a unified perception, as we do, would be in question. Take, for example, the previously mentioned experiment with patients whose brains are divided: even though there is a connection with the language centers, the manifestation of qualia would not be unified, as the experience itself is isolated and cannot be shared with other regions, limited to activating other manifestations of qualia but not sharing any component with them.

Nevertheless, considering the mentioned experiment, it seems that here lies the fundamental key. There must be a unifying center that constitutes our identity in a deeper sense; otherwise, the qualia would be independent of each other, as in the case of a split brain, resulting in an inability to apprehend and understand reality in its entirety. This relates to the atomic notion of the brain. We could conceive that brain activity in the cortex, being distributed, can give rise to a unified manifestation when connections are established, for example, between two nuclei of activation related to different manifestations of qualia. The presence of connections between these nuclei could give rise to a unified experience, considering the total activity as a coherent whole. However, in the absence of such unification, we could have independent qualia, without the emergence of a "unified experience" or manifestation, as observed in the case of split-brain patients.

The essential issue lies in the need for unification; this must exist in some form, otherwise, everything would be reduced to separate and disconnected units. This unified

activity, based on certain brain structures, would constitute what I previously referred to as "us," in the broadest sense. Thus, we must consider ourselves as that unified brain activity, encompassing not only the qualia related to the notion of the self but also the qualia linked to sensations and the perception of the environment at any given moment. The unification of this activity could be supported by certain mechanisms, which I will explore in detail later.

Summarizing the previously discussed points regarding consciousness, we can assert that consciousness, in its conception as qualia or subjective experience, implies the idea of being something, in the sense of establishing an identity with some entity. This entity, which must be singular and coherent, can be associated with neuronal activity, although doubts arise about this possibility, as mentioned at the beginning of this second part, or as a result of such neuronal activity. Moreover, this singular entity manifests itself together with other entities of the same nature, thus creating a unique entity, although each of these aspects is related to a particular form of qualia. In this way, the unified experience of consciousness is configured, composed of various qualia. The existence of a unifying mechanism, probably based on specific neuronal processes, is postulated as the link that binds these different aspects together. It is important to distinguish between the unitary entity and the unifying mechanism, as they are two distinct elements in this context.

On the other hand, questions arise considering the possibility that qualia are a product of neuronal activity rather than the activity itself. Some of these questions pose challenges, such as how the brain can "reflect" on subjective experience if the latter transcends the brain or is a result of it. These questions were addressed at the beginning of this second part. It has also been explored how, if qualia are indeed a product of the brain, they retain the fundamental structures of reality, allowing us to experience the world as we do. Moreover, it has been noted that this does not necessarily imply that qualia are an evolutionary advantage of consciousness as subjective experience, which is another question arising from these propositions.

n our way of thinking, we tend to position ourselves from the perspective of a quale manifestation, while perceiving others as "undetectable." This can be related to the previously mentioned experiment with split-brain patients, where one could argue that the patient identifies with the left hemisphere, which explains why they do not recognize the smell perceived by the right hemisphere. Similarly, this approach applies

to qualia, where each exists independently and is thus experienced from its own identity. Although other qualia are present, they are not perceived, implying the coexistence of multiple identities in the brain, but with a unified manifestation of consciousness, possibly facilitated by connections between different neural patterns.

Now, it is important to highlight the issue of unity. From an atomic brain perspective, unification is a conceptual challenge, but in theory, it is possible. There must be a homogeneous entity for us to experience what we do.

However, the question remains unanswered as to why, despite the existence of connections, we are not aware of certain brain activities. The notion of consciousness is often primarily associated with the sensory and perceptual, reflecting the generally accepted concept of consciousness as "awareness of something." However, we must also consider experiences that are not strictly sensory in the sense of referring to entities external to the mind, even though we relate them to qualia and grant them a sensory character, such as moods, which might be related to qualia different from visual or auditory experiences but are still linked to specific brain activities. Perhaps the way sensory-related activity manifests can explain certain types of these internal states. Essentially, when we talk about the manifestation of quale, we are addressing the aspect of perception and knowledge, which is intrinsically related to the sensory. However, it is also plausible to consider the existence of qualia in motor or cognitive contexts, which could broadly be termed as sensory. Additionally, it is relevant to recognize that in certain situations, even when sensory aspects are activated, we are only aware of a part of them, such as when exploring the semantic network while trying to recall a word, if that is the process in question.

It is possible that achieving the unification of consciousness not only requires connections between different brain nuclei but also the existence of a specific entity or structure where brain activity from various regions converges. To illustrate this approach, although we do not have a complete understanding of how this unification is achieved, we can consider the existence of a place where neural patterns activate in response to activity in multiple brain areas. When we identify with the activity based on this structure, we can say that certain brain activity activates certain patterns in this place, leading to consciousness and the experience of specific qualia. However, it is important to emphasize that these qualia already existed but did not manifest from the perspective of our identity until this structure is activated. While this structure is not

active, certain brain activity could be considered to belong to an unconscious dimension.

Following this line of thought, this unitary activity would imply the involvement of both cerebral hemispheres and active connections between them. The disconnection of these connections would result in the separation of both hemispheres, each with its own independent qualia, leading to two independent centers of unification. However, all these aspects would be contained within the unitary experience, which must manifest in some form. Regarding the possible evolutionary advantage of this process, if it exists, it might lie in the connections themselves, as these connections would increase the complexity of the individual's behavior, which in turn could be beneficial in terms of adaptation and survival.

It is true that the unification of consciousness does not seem to occur in the manner previously described, where the existence of a set of separate neural patterns for each neuronal activity was postulated. This approach would be inefficient and require a significant amount of additional neural resources. It would be important to explore observations and evidence that support this claim.

Instead, it is plausible to consider that mechanisms and structures such as working memory may play a fundamental role in the unification of consciousness and explain why there could be neuronal activity related to qualia of which we are not aware. Additionally, it is crucial to consider the levels of activity in different areas of the brain in relation to consciousness and the notion of qualia. Brain activity itself can represent the quale, and consciousness might be related to the intensity of activity in certain neuronal groups, the frequency of activity, or the number of patterns activated. The differences between various qualia could lie in the variations in activity of different neuronal groups, referring to specific patterns of activity.

The most notable concept we can extract from this analysis is the importance of unity in consciousness. It is essential that there be a unitary entity for us to experience and have a coherent identity. Based on this idea of unity, we could postulate the existence of specific brain mechanisms and circuits that contribute to the unification of different qualia. The unitary entity involved in these circuits and mechanisms could be what we define as our identity. This would provide a plausible explanation for the conscious experience we all undergo.

The activity level of certain patterns can result in some activities not being related to subjective experiences, even when connections and a context where the activity is integrated and unified exist. For example, consider the phenomenon of attention and how inhibitory activity in certain patterns can reduce their activity level. As this level decreases, the expression of consciousness in relation to these patterns diminishes.

We can also analyze different neural mechanisms that affect this phenomenon by modifying the patterns and their specific connections with other patterns, even if the connections still exist. What changes in this case is the nature of these connections in terms of the activity that manifests. This adaptation could be considered an advantage since the brain maintains active patterns relevant to behavior based on the environment while inhibiting other patterns with less activity, given that subjective experience is directly related to the activity of these patterns. Thus, the presence or absence of patterns that maintain connections with others expressing subjective experiences is simply a consequence of the adaptive advantage of keeping certain patterns active instead of others, based on their relevance to behavior, leading us to the notion of attention.

There is a difficulty in explaining the concept of "quale" and its unified manifestation. Furthermore, there is the challenge of understanding how the brain can express what it would under the atomistic conception of this concept. In this context, it becomes a challenge to identify what constitutes the underlying unity that defines our identity.

The issue becomes even more complex when considering how separate and distinct elements can lead to manifestations based on their joint activation, presenting as a whole. This unification, essential for brain function, raises questions about the nature of what we consider a unitary entity. Without this underlying unity, many cognitive abilities, such as sensations, reasoning, meaning, and conscious experience, would be incomprehensible.

As mentioned earlier, it is proposed that working memory could be the mechanism responsible for the unified manifestation of "qualia." The unification could be related to the circuits activated in working memory, possibly constituting the final pillar or underlying mechanism of all that has been discussed regarding consciousness as the "quale" of conscious experience.

When we talk about our consciousness at any given moment, it seems to be largely related to what is present or integrated into what we call "working memory." The structures involved in working memory must establish connections with various brain areas, allowing, for example, long-term stored memories, which are different from each other, to manifest together with current thought or observation. Our sense of identity would be rooted in the activity of these structures. In other words, we are the resultant activity of these structures, which in turn must constitute a unitary entity.

These structures necessarily need to maintain connections with various brain regions, unifying at any given moment a continuous and unitary neuronal activity that encompasses different qualia present, initially independent and associated with the activity of various brain regions. The activity previously integrated by local connections in specific brain regions would already provide a certain degree of integration or unification. Then, this set of activity becomes a continuous and unified entity, which can be considered as a single entity, thanks to the activation of connections between the activity patterns of the structures involved in working memory.

When, at a given moment, a sensation or a memory becomes present simultaneously with an integrated manifestation of other qualia, what happens is that the neuronal activity related to that sensation or memory connects through the activation of specific connections with the integrated manifestation of other qualia. This results in continuous and unified activity perceived as a single entity, and we, as individuals, identify with this activity. In this context, we become the neuronal activity itself, and this sensation or memory integrates into our perception of identity, as if it were part of who we are.

When we talk about "us," we refer to the specific neuronal activity we represent at that moment. Each of us identifies with the aspect of neuronal activity we represent, which, when converging with the activity of other neuronal groups related to certain qualia, gives rise to the joint and unified manifestation of these phenomena. The key lies in identifying with the activity of the circuits involved in working memory, which act as a medium allowing this integration. If we do not identify with the activity of these circuits, even if this does not directly relate to qualia, and if it adds to the patterns of neuronal activity in various brain regions, we would be in a situation where each neuronal pattern would manifest in isolation. Continuity and unification, as if they were

a single entity, require the presence and participation of these circuits and structures, which are part of who we are and contribute to the aspect of unification.

I don't claim that everything represented by working memory necessarily refers to our subjective conscious experience. Instead, I suggest that such experience could be contained within these circuits due to their integrative capacity. It's plausible that there is a working memory for elements operating on an unconscious level—those aspects that remain active in the brain and influence behavior, even if they aren't fully integrated into conscious experience. The scientific literature provides evidence supporting this perspective (see references 14 to 18 in the "References" section at the end of this work for more information on this topic).

Additionally, it's important to consider that our mental activity may not refer to "qualia" due to the nature of such activity. However, this doesn't exclude the possibility that we can also be that activity. The mental aspect of our identity is related to "qualia." On the other hand, the dimension of our unified entity might, in some cases, refer to or not refer to "qualia." If we consider the circuits involved in the unifying process, this duality is plausible. Being a unified entity in a unified process of "qualia" necessarily implies being an entity that doesn't refer to "qualia" in its particular form, but is unified with the rest of the entity that does refer to "qualia." It's important to remember that not all neuronal activity is related to "qualia." We add the idea that we can be that activity in a sense of identity, but the manifestation of "qualia" only occurs when we are an entity that refers to "qualia."

If what we are as a unified entity refers to a product of neuronal activity, then there would be a part of our identity that doesn't refer to "qualia" in its particular form, but is part of the aspects that do refer to "qualia" (see the illustrative diagram related to this point presented earlier). The question of how this product of brain activity can account for the structures of the world and retain the forms expressed by neuronal patterns was discussed at the beginning of this second section.

Consequently, even if one is considered a unified entity, if the structure of that entity doesn't refer to "qualia," then the manifestation of "qualia" wouldn't occur. As I mentioned earlier, if the level of reduction of neuronal activity wasn't appropriate and instead, the unified entity was a result of that activity, in that case, we would find ourselves in a sense of identity with that specific product of the activity of the circuits involved in working memory. What we would be in terms of our identity would be

linked to that product. It's important to highlight that, although we don't dismiss the possible involvement of other structures, all structures involved in associations could contribute to this dynamic.

We must not overlook the unifying function of the structure represented by the corpus callosum, which allows the activity of one cerebral hemisphere to manifest in continuity with the activity of the other hemisphere. As I mentioned earlier, subjective experience and "qualia" are related to the question of being and identifying with something, which could be the neuronal activity itself. In this context, being aware of something implies the integration of "qualia." Therefore, we become aware of a "qualia" when it is integrated with the set of "qualia" that we are. Considering the possibility that once a neuronal activity that refers to a "qualia" arises, this activity integrates immediately with the rest of the neuronal activity that refers to "qualia" and that we are in terms of our identity, it is possible that this is a consequence of the brain's structure.

Regarding the integrated experience of consciousness, particularly in the perceptual domain, the question arises whether we can perceive depth without contours or specific shapes. Is it possible to see colors without a particular shape? Is there a foundational aspect that, once removed, prevents the manifestation of other characteristics? Additionally, we should explore the possibility that this integrated experience is linked to the particular structure of what we are as a unified entity. This latter question represents a possibility worth considering.

The notion of integration presented here differs from the joint and unified manifestation of "qualia" of various modalities or of a single modality. These joint and unified manifestations would be based on being a unified entity with which we identify in relation to a specific object or phenomenon that refers to both a unit and various "qualia." In this process of unified manifestation, certain structures would play an important role, especially those involved in working memory, as I have previously mentioned.

In contrast, the discussion about integrated experience focuses more on how different "qualia" are manifested jointly and in a unified manner. In this context, the term "form" refers, for example, to whether the joint manifestation of four lines and a red color appears as a red square. It is plausible that there is a close relationship between what in the brain refers to a particular "qualia" and other factors that also refer to "qualia." These elements could be interconnected, so we could not experience, for

instance, movement without the presence of shapes, or they could be separated and unlinked in some cases but not in others.

It's possible that the connection between these elements, based on neural connections and activity related to form, color, or movement, helps explain why "qualia" manifest in the integrated way we observe, such as when we perceive a red square. Perhaps these connections and activities among these aspects give rise to a particular structure of what we are as a unified entity, and this specific structure ultimately explains the integrated experience in which we observe form, color, and movement as being unified.

I want to reiterate that I do not maintain that consciousness is merely integrated information. My focus is on the idea that consciousness involves being something, which in turn requires the existence of an identity with something specific. There cannot be a multitude of different elements with which one can establish an identity. Therefore, I propose that there must be a process to arrive at a continuum or a single entity, especially if we consider the atomic notion of the brain that I mentioned earlier. In this perspective, there is no true integration in the sense that everything is continuous, as there are discrete elements. Therefore, we must address the problem of unity to explain the nature of consciousness.

To illustrate this point, consider the following example: imagine the brain is like a university lecture, where each student represents an information processing node, or more simply, a neuron. In this class, each student has limitations in their perception of the environment; some can see in certain directions that others cannot, and vice versa. Some can hear what is happening in certain areas, while others cannot. Additionally, some students can only perform certain movements and actions. Despite these limitations, they can all engage in discussions with the professor and each other thanks to their ability to communicate. This represents a network of connected information, where each student has a limited scope of action, both in motor and perceptual terms.

However, this collective of students cannot perceive their environment in a unified and continuous manner, as a unique and integrated experience. Instead, each element responds and communicates with others in an independent and separate manner. What one group of students or one student can perceive at any given moment can be different from what others can perceive. This analogy reflects the nature of the brain when I mention that it operates under an atomic notion, where each element is independent and

separate, although there is communication between them in the sense that some can influence others.

In this context, the idea of a completely integrated consciousness experience, as proposed in the model of consciousness as integrated information, cannot account for the subjective dimension of consciousness, that is, the "qualia." My stance is that it is necessary to consider a sense of identity and a unitary substrate on which this identity is established as a fundamental basis for understanding consciousness.

The relationship between the degree of neuronal integration and consciousness does not necessarily imply that consciousness is synonymous with integrated information. The fundamental issue at stake is the unification of qualia, that is, the subjective experience of perception. To some extent, neural connections could play a role in creating a unified space from which our sense of identity arises. This is why consciousness would be related to this process, but it is not directly identified with integrated information itself.

When we talk about integrated information, we refer to the interaction between groups of neurons, where one group activates another, following a model of neuronal functioning similar to the atomic concept. As I have previously argued, information that is not fully integrated or shows low levels of integration can still give rise to subjective experience, as it is capable of establishing a sense of identity in the individual.

Neuronal integration alone is not sufficient to explain the manifestation of qualia. The key lies in the notion of identity, which helps explain how a unitary and unified sense is formed from which consciousness is experienced. Consciousness itself is understood as the identification with this integrated information.

In discussions about consciousness, a common mistake is confusing consciousness with other phenomena or processes, such as memory. Take, for example, the case of a person who, over a limited period of time, say an hour, can retain external perceptions for only a few seconds and then forgets everything experienced. This person is able to interact with their environment, albeit in a limited manner, but retains no knowledge of their interactions after a few seconds. At the end of the hour, they remember nothing of what happened during that period. In these circumstances, both the person and an external observer might erroneously conclude that the person was unconscious, as they lack any memory of what occurred. However, can we really conclude that the person

lacked consciousness during that period? Did the person not experience a subjective awareness of their actions, thoughts, and sensations, even if no subsequent memory was retained?

The answer to these questions seems to be no. Despite not retaining memories of their experiences after a few seconds, the person was fully capable of engaging in complex thoughts, communicating about themselves, perceiving and experiencing various sensations, among other activities. The same occurs when it is proposed that consciousness is related to the ability to plan for the future or engage in mental rehearsals of actions and other complex cognitive processes. The ability to plan for the future may be related to self-awareness, or vice versa—that once self-awareness is achieved, one can plan for the future or reflect on the past. However, it is important to highlight that self-awareness and consciousness itself are distinct concepts. Consciousness refers to the ability to experience a subjective awareness (qualia), while self-awareness involves subjective experience in relation to oneself.

The inability of an organism to conceive of the past or future and plan future actions does not necessarily imply a lack of subjective experience of what it perceives or what happens in its environment. A more complex organism in terms of cognitive capabilities is not necessarily more conscious than a simpler one. The difference lies in cognitive abilities. Both humans and other animals with fewer cognitive skills can exhibit consciousness, but they differ in what they are conscious of (i.e., which qualia they experience). In this sense, one is conscious of the subjective experience related to planning their behavior over time, as long as it is integrated with the rest of the qualia they experience. Consciousness is a quality that can manifest differently in various organisms, regardless of their cognitive complexity.

The issue of the unified manifestation of qualia from different sensory modalities implies the existence of a unitary entity acting as a sense of identity. In this context, the various qualia are experienced as a single entity, composing the sensation of identity.

This unification goes beyond simply referring to something unitary; it involves experiencing the various qualia as a single entity.

Neuronal activity plays a crucial role in this unification. The joint and continuous activity of circuits involved in working memory and various brain patterns corresponding to different qualia form the basis of this unification. This uninterrupted,

collective neuronal activity is experienced as the same entity, providing us with a sense of identity. Thus, our identity is not just linked to general neuronal activity but specifically to the activity of these circuits and neuronal groups. Other neuronal activity remains unconscious as it does not contribute to the specific identity formed by these circuits and patterns.

When integrating elements of the same sensory modality, such as color and shape, we again experience them as the same entity in terms of identity. This is because we cannot be different entities simultaneously regarding identity. The unified manifestation of each particular quale is based on being the same entity in terms of identity.

The particular structural form that the unitary entity we consider our identity takes plays an important role in this integration. This specific form determines the manifestation of specific qualia, such as color, shape, sound, etc. Additionally, this particular form can account for the manifestation of composite qualia, like the experience of a red square. In summary, the unification of qualia from different sensory modalities and their integration into a unitary entity is based on how we experience our identity and the structure that this unitary entity acquires.

It's important to avoid confusing the fact that two aspects of a sensory modality might depend on relatively separate regions in the brain with the experience of qualia. For example, in the case of a red square, the activity corresponding to the color red and the square shape may not necessarily be located in very close regions of the brain. Instead of relying on a direct interaction between neuronal groups for shape and color, the manifestation of a red square could result from the particular form of neuronal activity generated in the neuronal groups related to color and shape.

In other words, the integration of qualia, like a red square, does not necessarily depend on a physical connection or a specific mechanism in the brain that links the color and shape areas. Instead, the key could lie in the particular form of the unitary entity we experience as our identity, which refers to both characteristics, color and shape. This unitary entity, acting as a sense of identity, could inherently carry the joint and unified manifestation of these qualia, based on its own structure.

Despite the apparent disintegration in cerebral terms, such as the existence of separate neuronal patterns for shape and color, in terms of subjective experience, this disintegration could result in a red square when manifested together in a sense of

identity. That is, the integration of qualia, like a red square, could be rooted in the very structure of that unitary entity that forms our identity, beyond the need for a specific mechanism. This, of course, adds to the joint and unified manifestation of the qualia in the context of identity.

Thus, when we talk about a red square, we often mention the integration due to our ability to conceptually separate color and shape. However, this does not necessarily imply that there is a specific mechanism uniting them; rather, the form of the unitary entity that we are, in terms of a sense of identity, already incorporates the joint and unified manifestation of these aspects, creating the experience of a red square.

In summary, it's essential to consider that certain neuronal activity can be associated with qualia, but this is sometimes misinterpreted, especially when there is no memory of that activity. The absence of a memory record can lead to the erroneous belief that no qualia were present at a particular moment, even though the neuronal activity was associated with specific qualia, as I mentioned earlier in the context of memory.

When we perceive, what we experience is the activation of brain patterns, and we cannot experience the qualia of others because we are separate entities. Each of us is the result of the joint manifestation of qualia from which we center our sense of identity. Our identity, our "self," is formed by the association of different qualia that manifest together in a unified way, along with other qualia, depending on certain structures or circuits that allow the continuity and unification of the activity of separate patterns. In other words, our identity is related to the activity of different neuronal groups that we can consider as a single, continuous, and unified activity.

The distinction between the conscious and unconscious is largely based on focusing on certain qualia to the exclusion of others, which become foreign, unconscious, and not integrated into our conscious experience. What is considered conscious is what is part of our experience from which we start, what we focus on as our sense of identity. What constitutes our consciousness becomes unconscious for another starting point, another entity, or activity with which we can establish a different sense of identity.

The so-called conscious experience, which involves our identity, refers to a part of brain activity from which we center ourselves, separating it from the rest of the neuronal activity that follows a more "atomic" approach to the brain. In this perspective, qualia

are considered a universe in themselves, and the critical aspect is the ability to unify them. This ultimate activity may be related to specific qualia, depending on the type of neuronal activity manifested, and can be integrated in some way with the rest of what we define as "our experience," which establishes our identity in certain qualia. This view reflects my conception of epistemology or knowledge in individuals. Putting aside terms like reason, instincts, or passions, I maintain that the only source of knowledge is the association of ideas, and creativity involves the ability to form new associations, where previously unrelated elements are connected. These new associations can occur outside the realm of our conscious experience, being associations not integrated or unified in the context of our conscious experience, but they could be integrated at some point.

Emotions, for example, are associated with certain stimuli. These stimuli can be part of our conscious experience, i.e., the qualia from which we are centered, or they can involve associations not integrated with the associations from which we are centered, which form what we call conscious experience. In this sense, we are often aware of our emotions and bodily responses but are unaware of the associated stimuli that trigger those emotions. Emotions can function as signals indicating that there are associated stimuli of which we are not conscious, and that are giving rise to the emotional response. These stimuli can influence our conscious experience, but they do not necessarily have more validity in solving a problem than conscious stimuli.

Those who are most capable of acquiring knowledge, exercising creative ability, and directing their lives towards various goals must meticulously consider the elements of their consciousness, the information provided by their senses, the inclinations of their passions, and the manifestations of their mental associations. At times, it becomes imperative to shift attention away from the obvious to allow these unconscious associations to merge with the rest of their conscious experience and contribute to the formation of their identity. However, it is crucial to avoid the fallacy of presuming that one entity can inherently possess superiority over another based on a particular criterion or that a sudden revelation, termed "insight," inevitably holds the truth regarding an event.

Part Three

As I previously mentioned and argued in detail, I reject the concept of freedom detached from causality. The freedom of action, assumed by those who believe we are the authors of our actions, is based on decision-making that, in turn, relies on purposes. However, it is crucial to recognize that every cause has an effect, and the very notion of an autonomous "self," capable of generating effects without underlying causes, originates as an effect of brain function, a product of complex associations.

Every choice we make is invariably influenced by multiple factors, whether recent events or past experiences, which condition our behavior in various ways. When we observe an individual, we often see their immediate social context reflected in their clothing, behavior, personal preferences, and even in their choice of music. This raises the question of whether the individual exercises their freedom or is determined by their environment. The answer to this question is not categorical and depends on the functioning of the brain and its interaction with the environment. Our understanding of freedom is framed by defining the limits of what we consider freedom and how we perceive the functioning of a subject, and this approach is constructed from empirical observations.

It is argued that there is no immutable causal chain leading to absolutely predictable events if we had complete knowledge of all the factors involved. Despite the existence of multiple possibilities in our future, in the real world and in terms of our singular experience, only one possibility ultimately materializes.

Since two contradictory and mutually exclusive effects cannot coexist simultaneously—if A is the cause of either B or C (represented as B or C), if B occurs, the occurrence of C at the same moment becomes impossible, and vice versa. This principle holds in the context of our everyday reality, without considering the complexities of quantum theory, which operates on a different scale.

The cause of these events, such as the variation in my speed, determines which of these two events will materialize at a given moment, but not both at the same time. Without prior knowledge of the underlying causes of B or C, it is impossible to predict with certainty which of them will occur in a future moment. Therefore, although we

cannot precisely anticipate what will happen in the future, this does not imply that there are multiple alternatives to what will ultimately happen. The occurrence of B or C will be determined by unknown causal factors. As long as there is an alternative, it cannot be termed as such, as this would imply the possibility of other equally probable events instead of the chosen option.

In the context of deterministic classical mechanics, if the position and velocity of a particle at a given moment were known, it would be possible to predict its position at any future moment. However, this conception is challenged by quantum mechanics, in which certain interpretations, such as Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, establish that it is not possible to simultaneously and arbitrarily determine certain pairs of physical variables, such as the position and linear momentum of a particle. The more precision we seek in determining the position of a particle, the less information we will have about its linear momentum, and vice versa, as the observation itself affects the particle's state. This results in a wave function where the velocity or position of a particle can be known with great precision, but not both simultaneously. For detailed information on this principle, see reference 19 in the "References" section at the end of this work.

In this context, it is proposed that, due to our lack of knowledge of the underlying causes, nevertheless, events B and C cannot coexist simultaneously in our reality. In other words, B and C are not possibilities for a specific moment; we simply do not know which of the two events will occur without exception. This does not necessarily imply that we lack determinism, as when making a decision between alternatives B and C, we are conditioned to choose one of them, and this choice materializes effectively.

However, in the quantum realm, the notion of causes might not apply in the same way. This doesn't contradict the idea that we are determined, since quantum principles do not apply at our scale.

Defining freedom is crucial for establishing a criterion. In many cases, freedom is defined as the absence of causes that determine the state of something, which opposes determinism. At our scale, we live in a determined world where our actions create a continuous causal chain.

It's possible to argue that we have a certain freedom in the sense that we generate content and representations based on associations, but this freedom is limited by determined factors. The process itself remains determined.

When we make decisions among alternatives, we generally do so for specific reasons. These reasons act as causes that direct us in a particular direction. Even if we try to demonstrate that we have the freedom to choose the opposite, we are still influenced by a reason that leads us toward a specific choice. Therefore, the notion of freedom becomes a complex and nuanced topic in our determined world.

It's evident that we lack freedom of choice in the sense of a total absence of causes. Otherwise, our decisions would be completely arbitrary, without any apparent motive or intention. This would not be consistent with the functioning of entities, including ourselves, that are intrinsically tied to their structures. The so-called "spontaneity" in our behavior, which is sometimes considered desirable, cannot be considered truly spontaneous in my view, since it ultimately follows the flow of the structure that manifests itself, which is always present, as everything operates according to that structure.

When we make a decision with the aim of demonstrating that we possess the ability to choose an alternative, it's important to consider that even this decision is determined by the intrinsic cause of wanting to prove a point. Therefore, there is no situation that escapes this reality, since even the desire to demonstrate choice implies a causal determination. This brings us to an unbreakable limit within this criterion.

Some people argue that the fact that we make decisions based on specific reasons implies a cause for our action and, therefore, determines us. However, they then claim that because of this determination, we cannot choose, act with purpose, or guide our behavior according to certain principles that we consider appropriate by a certain criterion. This contradiction arises from the mistaken belief that the determination of our actions nullifies our ability to make deliberate decisions and direct our behavior according to certain values or principles. In fact, we can perform all these actions without prior determination preventing our ability to choose. Behind these arguments against human possibilities often lie pessimistic attitudes or nihilistic thinking.

The notion of freedom can be explored through the concept of "reciprocal causality." This implies that the causes of our actions are intrinsically linked to the conditions we are subject to. In this sense, if we wish to change our actions, we must modify or generate new conditions, which in turn create new causes for our behaviors. This circular mechanism could be considered a source of freedom.

However, a question arises about the reason behind generating these conditions and changes. Here, the cause cannot be attributed to this circular mechanism itself, as the reason lies in our overall motivation to do so, which is essentially determined by circumstances influenced by both external and internal factors. Although the influence of the re-conditioning mechanism's dynamism may have occurred in the past and may modify our preferences, the most influential variables are often novel and beyond our control, driving us to change. Therefore, we could conclude that our freedom is, in essence, partial or limited.

However, there is a risk of falling into a determinist explanation based on biological or environmental factors to justify our behavior, when in reality, we should consider what actions we can take to change that behavior. Can we, in part, escape these conditions?

An alternative perspective is to consider ourselves as part of a reciprocal dynamic between various variables that can be considered determinants. In this context, with a continuous and progressive relationship that lacks a defined beginning or end, we stop talking about concrete causes. The environment and genetics no longer determine us in themselves, as these influences intertwine and mutually influence each other, determining each other. The organism becomes just another factor in this complex web of interactions. However, it is necessary to recognize that there must be some limit or causal point that marks the rest of this continuous functioning, this "flow."

It is plausible to consider the concept of "constant flow" as a process in which certain events act as causes that, in turn, determine other events, a continuous flow of causation. However, this approach can create some confusion when trying to define whether determinism or freedom is at play. Although the "constant flow" is a reality, this process does not necessarily allow for choices without determinants, as the notion of self-determinism still falls within a context of causes, even if these are related to the individual. Even through the re-conditioning mechanism, it cannot be said that we enjoy full freedom in this sense.

In reality, the discussion around terms like "determinism" or "freedom" can be seen as a manifestation of our confusion regarding these concepts, as well as our desires. From our perspective, what prevails is action. Our way of functioning, seemingly considered personal choices and individual behavior, originates directly from a brain response, a pre-established mechanism activated in response to external stimuli.

Although this might be perceived as an expression of our identity, it is ultimately a manifestation of our brain's determination, as observed in the mental states we are aware of. These states are intrinsically linked to biochemical activity in our brains, which represents a form of determination.

However, what happens in the brain goes beyond these biochemical events. The notion of functioning in association suggests that concepts like free will, as commonly understood, are not applicable. Nevertheless, it could be argued that neurochemical changes do not necessarily have to be determinative if we learn to recognize and respond to them consciously. Understanding why we behave in certain ways could be fundamental to not being completely subject to the determinism of our biochemistry, allowing for greater autonomy in our decisions and actions.

However, our functioning resembles a causal process, which implies an action that limits the notion of freedom according to the criteria that have been presented on numerous occasions. Nonetheless, it is essential to clarify that the concept of determination is often misunderstood. In essence, determination refers to what is allowed, meaning that when we say something is determined, we are indicating that this element is feasible in reality, at least at our scale of perception, which means its existence is plausible and occurs in its specific state. This is only possible thanks to the presence of a structure that enables its existence, as without this structure, such existence would be unattainable. In this context, the cause becomes the structure that enables the manifestation of that element. Therefore, when some argue that things are not determined, they are essentially saying that those things are not possible or that they wish them to be feasible. In other words, they wish for them to be feasible, but only in an unreal realm. It is worth noting that the limit lacks a cause; however, we are not a limit, but an action.

It seems that what individuals seek with the concept of free will, when considering it as self-determination without causes (despite the term "determination" in "self-determination" implying causes), is the existence of an entity that stands outside of causality and prescribes how the brain should function. This entity is often perceived as the "Self" or personal identity under certain conditions. However, it is crucial to understand that this entity is configured as a limit, something devoid of causes. Nonetheless, this perspective presents a dilemma, as from an ultimate point that lacks causes, there can be no intention, desire, will, etc. These elements imply an action, a

"Self" that acts, but in its pure form, it simply exists. The manifestation of characteristics like intention, according to this entity, would not constitute a true intention in the conventional sense of the term; rather, each characteristic would be a structure that simply is. The "Self" would not have the faculty to determine an intention that it desires in a self-determined manner, as this intention could only be according to the predetermined form, to the inherent structure of the "Self" itself.

This pattern manifests in reality, but it does not allow for the existence of free will as previously defined. In this perspective, every expression of behavior would be the only possible one, given that it is a pattern that simply is, immutable. If the "Self" were to change itself, there would be causality for that act of change, and the initial cause of that change would be without causes, making it arbitrary and devoid of intention. There would also be no self-awareness in this entity, as consciousness implies causality. It could be argued that it gains self-awareness after its form establishes causality with respect to things, but this would already be a caused process, not self-determined.

Simultaneously, the question arises of how something without self-awareness could establish behavior that includes the perception of its own existence. This question applies to the idea of a God, as posited in initial propositions. In the case of a God conceived as the primordial form of existence, it is difficult to assert that it possesses self-awareness, and therefore, it could not have an intention that includes knowledge of its own existence and desires. This is based on the intrinsic logic of consciousness, which implies awareness of something, even when that "something" constitutes part of consciousness itself, as in the case of qualia, which represent the object subjectively experienced as perceived. In the realm of subjective experience, that "something" becomes consciousness, becomes qualia, but two elements underlie this: what is activated and what activates. Knowing one's own existence involves going beyond form, beyond mere existence, which suggests a limit, implying the existence of a cause that lacks existence.

One possible hypothesis could be that a primordial form consists of multiple entities, each lacking self-awareness but capable of being aware of another entity. However, this idea presents difficulties, as the awareness of something would not be feasible at this level of limit, given that the primordial structure does not possess the property of changing its own form and, therefore, what this form implies. No change is allowed in this primordial structure, at least regarding its basic structure, as argued in

the first part. Even if a change in form could be conceived, and there were self-awareness, it would be irrelevant to reality as a whole, since everything would simply be the manifestation of its form, which would be the primordial cause of all that exists, and the relevant aspect would be the form itself. Consciousness would not influence the configuration of things in a specific way, as these would still be manifestations of the primordial form, which ultimately is the determining variable.

The notion that a God or the "Self" could determine themselves presents a dilemma when considering their supposed existence outside of causality. If there is no cause beyond them, which seems logical, neither the "Self" nor a God can determine what they desire or intend to do, as the limit of their existence is simply "being." In other words, a God as a limit, or the "Self" as a form not subject to a determining cause, can only manifest what they are, but do not have the capacity to be truly free according to the criterion of freedom without causes. This means they cannot voluntarily generate a desire, an intention, or any other aspect, as they simply "are," without the faculty to cause themselves.

From this perspective, a God, according to the traditional concept in our culture, loses relevance as the ultimate reason for everything with intelligent sense or purpose, since there would be other underlying causes for such motives. If, in some way, the primordial form without causes represented the will of a God, there would be no real choice; it would simply be as it is, without an intelligent purpose, making it seem arbitrary. There would be no intelligent reason or purpose for it, as it would be the cause of a God manifesting a form without causes. This scenario would suggest a kind of unreal "magic" and would not align with a logical and coherent understanding.

The other alternative would be to accept the existence of ontological randomness in a certain sense, particularly concerning the change in the state of things if the change of state were not determined by the inherent structure of things. However, this would imply that behavior would be fundamentally arbitrary and lack a logical foundation or underlying purpose.

Often, individuals resort to reasoning that could be described as emotional when arguing that determinism undermines the notion of will, responsibility, and other essential concepts, and therefore conclude that determinism cannot be true. However, it is undeniable that our characteristics and actions are subject to causes.

To support the idea that we possess some degree of freedom, we often appeal to our perception of control over our actions. We act as we wish, carry out projects according to our will, think about what we choose, and remember according to our desires, among other examples. In this sense, we seem capable of making decisions based on specific premises, with the aim of achieving a concrete goal, reflecting a particular image of ourselves based on ideals and values that we consider valuable. One could argue that the way we carry out our actions or make decisions is determined by previous experiences, genetic factors if we focus on a biological realm, or even recent experiences. Although determining precisely which experience led us to behave in a certain way might be difficult or even impossible, if we managed to identify it, we could modify that conditioning, relearn, and thus change our way of acting and our preferences. In this context, we would be the authors of our own determination, gaining a form of freedom.

However, this approach as a criterion of freedom contains a fallacy, as we would always find a prior cause that determines our self-regulation, and following this cycle, we would never reach a point of indeterminacy. Consequently, it is not appropriate to speak of freedom in terms of the absence of causes. The problem lies in the associations implicit in the established criterion of freedom, which do not align with reality.

Science, in its essence, does not effectively address the notion of individual freedom. Its focus is on experimentation and replicability, which unfortunately tends to overlook the uniqueness and irrepeatability of human experience. However, the question arises: do we authentically possess freedom? This issue relates to the perception that science has shown how our actions are governed by natural laws, which, at first glance, seems to deny the existence of freedom. The argument that science does not address freedom is based on the assumption that freedom is a reality, but scientific investigation seems to indicate that the so-called freedom, particularly human freedom, is more of an illusion according to the criterion presented.

While there are generally no objections to the idea that physical objects and their interactions are governed by natural laws, it's interesting to consider why there is an objection to determinism when it comes to the human mind. Science is a method that provides results, and using these results to make negative judgments about the human condition would be inappropriate, as it implies a subjective value. Science, by its nature, contributes to understanding reality and describing phenomena but does not engage in

value judgments. Valuing things falls exclusively within the realm of individual decisions.

The belief in the existence of freedom, according to established criteria, can offer comfort or generate uncertainty. However, there is no guarantee that this belief is not simply an illusion, a construction that aligns with people's deepest desires. Ultimately, one must ask whether our beliefs truly reflect the reality we desire or if they are merely a projection of our wishes.

When it is stated that freedom does not exist, it refers to a particular concept of freedom, which implies the ability to act without being determined by prior causes. A criterion that might correspond to this conception is the idea of "acting as we wish," as proposed by David Hume (see reference 20 in the "References" section at the end of this work). While I do not know if this is the predominant interpretation of free will, it could be a valid way to consider it from a more politically oriented perspective.

We could argue that our freedom increases to the extent that we are influenced by multiple causes, even those that might be independent of each other, according to a certain criterion of freedom. Many might argue that if we are under the influence of a specific cause, such as the effects of a psychoactive substance, our actions possess a lesser degree of freedom compared to situations where we are not subject to such influence. When we are conditioned by what we might call the "force of our instincts," our actions can be perceived as less free compared to situations where multiple factors, such as the environment, learning, recent influences, and the interaction between our organism and its surroundings, act together in a complex manner. Under this latter approach, the presence of multiple causes provides us with a greater degree of freedom, according to the established criteria.

The question of the degree of freedom inherent to the "Self" in the context of dynamic psychological theories raises profound issues about the nature of identity and the relationship between consciousness and the unconscious. These theories suggest that much of our identity and motivations may be influenced by underlying causes, such as desires, feelings, and purposes, that operate on an unconscious level. This raises the issue of whether there exists a separate entity, an "unconscious identity," that coexists with our consciousness.

From a perspective based on functioning through associations, it could be argued that what we call consciousness is simply a part of these unconscious processes that emerge into our perception or conscious experience through another process. In this view, the identity we form could be an amalgamation of conscious and unconscious elements interacting in a complex manner.

The question of whether unconscious contents, like dreams, possess symbolic content crafted by an entity separate from the individual's conscious center is valid. Some critics argue that what is interpreted as latent content in dreams could, in many cases, be projections of our own theories and underlying associations, rather than a deeper unconscious elaboration. In other words, they suggest that some elements may not be inherently symbolic but acquire meaning through our personal associations and thought processes.

It is also mentioned that communication between the unconscious and the conscious may not be as generally understood, given that the processes are influenced by activations and associations. Instead of direct communication, what might be happening is the activation of thoughts and feelings based on previous experiences. From this perspective, our mind functions in a certain way due to our biological capacity and our past experiences, and the unconscious is an integral part of who we are as individuals.

Therefore, dynamic psychological theories raise complex questions about the nature of identity, the interaction between the conscious and the unconscious, and the relationship between underlying causes and individual freedom. The perspective based on associations and underlying processes offers an interesting interpretation of these issues, though it remains a subject of debate and criticism.

In this context, we cannot consider ourselves "slaves" to either our impulses or our unconscious. Rather, we become the unconscious itself and are the drivers of our actions. The notion of a structure called the "Self" being subjugated by another structure lacks foundation, as we are a unified entity in the way we process information and function through associations. Our identity is composed of a variety of sensory experiences and cognitive processes.

It is crucial to consider that our brains are the epicenter of our conscious experiences, significantly influenced by our own actions and the patterns our brains

establish. Conversely, what emerges in the unconscious realm follows a constant causality, where each event invariably follows a preceding cause. Our behavior is governed by laws and unfolds according to this causal sequence. On our scale, the notion of freedom, understood as the absence of causes, is nonexistent.

When discussing agreement with the concept of freedom, it is essential to define what we mean by "freedom." Rather than traditional freedom, what truly exists is a defined set of possibilities and behaviors, even if they originate in brain processes, which can undoubtedly vary. However, the idea of being free in the sense of lacking causes that determine our choices is incorrect. Both the act of becoming aware of our choices and the choices themselves are intrinsically linked to prior causes, which in turn depend on other causes. As individuals, we are immersed in a continuous flow in which we participate, giving rise to various discernible phenomena. In this sense, notions of freedom based on the absence of causes fade in the face of the constant dynamism in which we are immersed and that generates the phenomena we can identify.

The impossibility of attributing the concept of free will is evident in reality itself. It is reality in its essence that determines things as we perceive them; otherwise, we would have no basis for making these assertions.

Many people hold the idea that in a deterministic world, free will does not exist, because if all our acts are determined by one process preceding another, then the notion of freedom is meaningless, and there is no need to make judgments in terms of intention or will. However, it is possible to make judgments based on other causes. We can consider a mind in the same way we evaluate the functioning of a machine, that is, in terms of how it operates and the responses it produces, relative to our standards. A mind, like a machine, operates within the framework of causality. It can be argued that we are not responsible for what we do, but what we do is intrinsically linked to the functioning of our mind, and since we are our mind, we are partially responsible for our actions. The mind does not exist in isolation; it depends on the existence of other elements, such as the qualities of perception that shape our conscious experience.

In summary, there is an inevitable interrelation between the environment and the person, but the person is a partial cause of an event. If we consider responsibility as a matter of cause (following this criterion), then we are responsible for something when we are the cause or part of the cause of that something. If an action and its consequences originate in part from the functioning of our brain, then we are partially responsible for

that action, in the sense that we are one of its causes. As I mentioned earlier, the individual is a causal agent, and environmental factors and social context do not act on their own, but through the actions of individuals. Ultimately, the debate about responsibility centers on a way of orienting and behaving, a responsive attitude towards one's conduct. The key factor in this consideration is the individual who harms another, despite knowing the immorality of their action, and the possibility of having avoided such action becomes secondary, since the need to repair the harm persists if both individuals and justice agree on its importance.

When this discussion shifts to the political realm, arguing that people are not responsible for their wealth, but that it is due to external factors such as the environment, opportunities, luck, among others, and that this justifies the need for social justice in wealth redistribution, it presents a dilemma that questions the very foundation of social justice. The reality does not support the legitimacy of those who carry out the redistribution, since they are also not responsible for their circumstances that lead them to act in a certain way. Consequently, their participation in economic matters is not necessarily justified under these criteria.

From my perspective, we must recognize that various influences shape our existence. In any case, we must strive to correct or improve what arises from the predetermined, although this quest for improvement is also subject to determinants. It could be argued that the more factors affect us, the more room there is for freedom and, therefore, for assuming responsibility, at least from a particular perspective. However, the issue lies in the consequences of such judgments.

Ultimately, the idea of pure voluntarism (understood as freedom as self-determination without external causes) is not viable. This does not imply that we are tied to a single cause, because in that case, we would be prisoners and could not be considered responsible, at least according to a specific criterion. Instead, we can acknowledge that everything in our reality is the result of a broad network of causes that occur together, even if we choose to segment them. Additionally, speaking of our "Self" as responsible, when our own "Self" is the product of causal processes, presents significant philosophical challenges.

Within the framework of responsibility understood as cause, I argue that an individual, as an organism, assumes responsibility because they are part of the causes, or even the cause (if conceived as such), of their own actions, apart from other

influences like the environment. It can be stated that the presence of multiple causes grants us a certain degree of freedom, according to a specific criterion. However, we must be willing to face the consequences of our actions if we consider an individual responsible for their actions.

When we confront cases of criminals who have lived in marginal conditions their entire lives, a relevant question arises: to what extent are they responsible for their behavior? We often tend to punish the individual, but their actions are largely the result of their situation and context. Therefore, it is crucial that we consider the consequences of their actions instead of focusing solely on the causes or determining whether the individual is responsible.

It is true that context plays an important role, but these facts are only one of the many causes that influence behavior. In part, the individual represents a cause (responsibility as cause), and in part, the causes reside in the context. What I want to emphasize is the importance of analyzing the consequences of actions and how these affect the individual and society as a whole. Often, the punishment for a crime is evaluated based on the subject's capacity to make decisions and carry out their actions freely, but this should not be the central focus, as all our actions are ultimately determined. The essential thing is to consider the consequences of their actions and whether these consequences allow the individual to remain part of social coexistence.

It's valid to argue that a person has the judgment capacity to avoid committing a crime and, in a sense, knows their actions are wrong. Another person may have the same knowledge but chooses not to commit the crime. The decision-making ability (a determined process, not an independent choice from causality) is present in both cases but is based on learned values, ideas, desires, and other factors. If an individual grows up in an environment that doesn't allow them to develop the ability to make decisions that generate benefits without harming others, the result will be a specific response.

Therefore, if a person who does not face such limitations commits a crime, they can be considered responsible, although we must be aware that excluding them from society and restricting their opportunities sometimes does not represent an effective solution to the problem.

It seems that if we hold individuals who face limitations responsible, whose behaviors stem from their context, we might be promoting a form of justice that

resembles revenge more than correction. However, it's important to consider that context is not the only cause of actions (responsibility as cause), as the individual is an integral part of this cause, being the point where various influences converge.

The symbol of justice, represented by a balance, could be interpreted as an act seeking to restore balance when it is disrupted, rather than preventing the initial imbalance, for example. However, another perspective of justice, in my opinion, involves preventing certain events from occurring (though challenges arise in determining these events and the actions needed to prevent their recurrence) and remedying the consequences of conflicts between individuals (through negotiating an agreement between the involved parties), although this process can be complex.

In any case, it would be wrong to justify our behavior by invoking single causes, as we are multiply determined. Although our identity is formed from certain causes, we must consider that these are only part of the equation.

The mistake many theories about human behavior make is considering one cause as the determining factor of an individual's behavior, when in reality it is the combination of two or more causes that produce one or more effects, that is, behaviors. Most behaviors result from multiple influences, which does not imply that we do not act under causes from this perspective.

What we often call "decisions" originate from information processing and association-based functioning. Behaviors are the product of this processing, and this whole process develops in a continuous causal line. We are still investigating the role these processing products play in shaping our actions, and this is a question that requires ongoing exploration.

It may seem paradoxical, but from another perspective on freedom, the more determining causes there are, the freer we might be. This is because if we were subject to a single cause, such as the control of another person over us, our freedom would be limited. The presence of multiple causes could, in a sense, nullify a determining cause, such as the influence of another individual.

In this context, I believe that our true possibilities and our capacity for judgment are based on the richness of our mental associations. These associations enable behaviors and decision-making that can be more or less satisfactory depending on our goals and aspirations. A decision completely devoid of causes would be impossible within our

cognitive scale and functioning. Even if causality were eliminated at a certain level, decision-making at that point would be arbitrary. Therefore, we must recognize that our choices are based on reasons and causes that reside in our mental associations, which implies caused behavior.

It's important to clarify that the absence of freedom in the sense of uncaused behavior does not exempt an individual from responsibility for their actions. The freedom I mentioned as nonexistent refers to the unrealistic notion that actions and thoughts can lack causes and still be directed toward certain ends. Freedom, in a more realistic sense, can exist and depends on how we define this notion and what is associated with it. If we consider freedom as the ability to act according to our desires, which include goals and purposes based on criteria and values that the individual maintains and can identify, then freedom exists.

From this perspective of freedom, an individual who understands the consequences of their actions and the means they use to achieve their goals is responsible for their actions. The lack of causality does not eliminate responsibility in these cases, as it is based on a mistaken concept of freedom, the absence of causes. Responsibility, in the context of freedom based on decision-making according to desires and values, requires a notion of responsibility that refers to the knowledge or ignorance of the consequences of actions and the means used. If a person is unaware of the consequences of their actions, they can be made aware of them. Even if the person cannot always determine all the consequences, they can take responsibility for their actions while acknowledging the limitation of available information. Knowledge is fundamental, and the individual can assume responsibility for their actions even when there is uncertainty about the consequences, as long as we are aware of the possible outcomes and act in accordance with our values and criteria.

Responsibility, in its essence, can be considered a form of behavior, or rather, an attitude that shapes such behavior. This attitude is a causal process that must be acquired through learning. It's important to highlight that the notion of responsibility differs from that of causality. While we might assert that an entity, like God, is responsible for its actions and, therefore, for the existence of the universe, we cannot conflate responsibility with causality. Responsibility is a manifestation of a specific behavior.

In this sense, it's relevant to observe that notions such as intention and will disappear under a general understanding that considers them as causal processes. Ultimately, everything that exists originates from causal processes. The purposes and values that influence our actions are the result of something and are linked to a causal process. Similarly, a God, in this same context, would not be the ultimate cause of what happens; rather, its responsibility would lie in its way of acting. In other words, God acts in a determined manner but is not the ultimate cause of its actions or their consequences; these depend on a series of causes. Analogously, our own actions are the result of causal processes. The goals and values that guide our actions are the product of a causal process that originates in our thinking, based on associations of ideas. This causal process generates concepts such as goals, values, identity, and the concept of "Self," among others.

Part Four

The term "sense" in the philosophical context refers to a complex and multifaceted concept. To understand it adequately, we can establish several criteria. One of these relates to sense as the cause of events and phenomena in reality. In this sense, the term refers to the ultimate explanation of why things are as they are. However, we must distinguish this interpretation from another perspective, where "sense" is considered as a given entity, such as the meaning of human life and the universe as a whole, and even the reason for being that implies, though not necessarily entails, an intrinsic purpose. The issue is that this latter interpretation seems not to refer to any concrete aspect of reality.

Revisiting a previous discussion, it is argued that God cannot provide sense in terms of a purpose or reason for things. This is evident when questioning what sense God Himself would have. If human beings are a divine creation given a purpose, the question arises about what is the reason for God's existence, that is, what is His own sense or cause. The conclusion is that there is no ultimate sense in this context, as it would imply an infinite regression of causes, which is incoherent and unsustainable. Ultimately, what prevails is an absence of causes at a final level, leading to the idea of a lack of sense in existence itself, at least under this criterion.

Furthermore, any entity arising from an origin lacking sense will also lack ultimate sense, as its foundation derives from something senseless. Even if we consider sense as established by individuals, that is, the reason or purpose of life, this depends on certain states of matter organization that allow intelligence and the capacity to reason and express emotions. However, this chain of causality does not reach an ultimate sense, as it traces back to previous causes, creating an infinite succession of causes. It is important to understand that the universe does not "need" the existence of intelligence or emotions; rather, we exist because conditions have permitted it. The key here is to focus on the consequences, rather than seeking an intrinsic purpose in things.

Ultimately, whether we consider the existence of God or not, if there is no uncaused primary cause, the concept of sense does not find a place in reality. In other words, logic leads us to the conclusion that there is no absolute sense in reality, especially when we equate it with the concept of causes.

One can reflect on how the world would be if humans had never appeared on Earth. Undoubtedly, it would be a different world. Some might argue that our absence would challenge the order of the universe, as we are here for some reason. However, life can ultimately be understood as an increase in the complexity of matter that arises to the extent possible. This does not imply that it has an intrinsic purpose. Reality would be different without our existence, but it would not destabilize any preexisting order, as there is no preconceived order we are meant to fulfill. If we had never existed, different events would have taken place, and a different reality with its own set of events would have developed. Our perception of "order" is a product of our observation of reality, but this does not necessarily mean that our existence gives rise to a preordained order, such as the existence of a divine entity like God. Such an attribution is not a logical deduction, and according to what we know about the world, it is not the only plausible explanation.

Similarly, if we claim that the universe seems "fine-tuned" to allow for the existence of life, and more specifically human life, this does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that there is an intelligent entity behind this tuning. Life does not necessarily have to be a purpose; it can be a natural consequence of favorable conditions for its development. Additionally, we should question the nature of God: if His existence is considered part of nature itself, why couldn't life have arisen naturally? There is no reason to assume that God is the only explanation.

Even if we consider God as the solution for the apparent fine-tuning of the universe, we still face the question of why God's nature is so precise and finely tuned to give rise to the specific universe we observe. Ultimately, the Earth will disappear at some point, and unless new intelligent species arise, any "order" in which humans have participated will have a limited effect and will be restricted to the local realm of planet Earth.

In a causal regression, nothing reaches an ultimate meaning; the universe and reality lack a fundamental reason, that is, they have no intrinsic purpose. The same applies to the contents of reality. Although we may find meaning in something, this meaning is provided by individuals, but ultimately, it lacks an ultimate sense.

When we assert that "A is greater than B" and "B is greater than C," and therefore "A is greater than C," we are applying a logical reasoning that makes sense in itself and requires no further justification, as it is based on an evident logical relationship.

Similarly, reality and existence are fundamental and manifest through the inherent logic within them. However, when we refer to "meaning" in a different context, such as an underlying cause or purpose, it lacks logical sense in terms of a cause.

The "why" of the existence of logic or existence itself is nonexistent, as there are no causes that can explain them, and therefore, we cannot question why they exist. In this sense, the concept of "meaning" (from this perspective) is a human construction, an invention of our mind.

The sensation of transcendence we experience, which arises from our ideas, feelings, and emotions, is the result of mental processes. These experiences are related to our biology and originate from natural selection. It is important to remember that the associations generated in our minds have a connection to reality in terms of perception, but when it comes to emotions, these associations refer to internal aspects of our reality, such as the emotions perceived and their relationships with other things, whether arbitrarily or not. This differs from the perception of external reality.

What we usually consider as giving us meaning and what we experience as satisfaction with it do not possess an independent or autonomous sense, beyond their relationship to reality and their evolutionary function that promoted their development in human nature. We can recognize that, although we cannot escape this process, what ultimately governs our lives is the previously mentioned criterion: the limit of our preferences, the criterion that sets the boundaries of our rational decisions through associations of ideas and goals. This ultimate criterion, which I have identified as "reward," plays a fundamental role in our actions. Ultimately, our actions depend on what rewards us.

When we talk about reward, we don't just refer to automatic responses, like withdrawing your hand when you touch something hot. Rather, we refer to more complex behaviors involving various variables. The search for reward can manifest in different ways, such as seeking physical pleasure, pursuing what we believe makes us happy, maintaining our self-esteem, or simply seeking a state without suffering or pain, but with peace and tranquility, which implies a higher level of reward than suffering. We may also take actions to avoid being criticized or negatively evaluated by others. All these actions are based on the pursuit of reward, that is, comparing states of reward relative to each other, guiding our decisions at any given moment.

Some may wish for an abstract purpose or an independent reason for our lives to determine what we should do. However, reality lacks definitive criteria, ultimate ends, or final reasons. We might ask, "What are our states of reward?" Ultimately, these states result from chemical and molecular processes, organized in a certain way to form systems that lead to specific manifestations in our minds.

In summary, our notion of meaning refers to what we value in the world and what becomes our purpose or goal to achieve. This meaning is rooted in our pursuit of reward, which influences our actions and decisions. We do what gives us pleasure instead of pain due to the influence of evolutionary processes that have shaped our response to reality. The sensation of pleasure or pain originates from interacting with the external reality, but the way our organism interprets and manifests these sensations has evolved over time.

Pain is not considered a state of reward, and therefore, we do not actively seek it. As beings that seek reward, we direct our actions towards states we perceive as pleasurable or that promise rewards. As we have developed our capacity for thought, we have gone from labeling experiences, facts, or actions as "good" or "bad" based on whether they involve a state of reward or not, to calling them "moral" or "immoral," "ethical" or "unethical."

The ultimate basis of these ethical and moral notions is reward, since in reality, there are no absolute ends or criteria separate from individuals as independent abstract entities (as mentioned in the first part). However, the moral standards established often do not guarantee high states of reward in the long term. In other words, although our actions are influenced by the desire to obtain rewards, we sometimes follow moral guidelines that may not lead to optimal results in terms of personal satisfaction.

Moreover, people have formulated principles, norms, and various ethical and moral criteria as if they were external entities, as if we had an intrinsic obligation to follow them, independent of our pursuit of reward. However, in reality, there is no objective reason to perform certain actions, aside from what individuals do by virtue of their nature to seek rewards.

What we consider pleasant or important in the world acts as an internal guide, indicating what rewards us and fills our lives with meaning. This is because these things are associated with reward, to varying degrees. However, it is valid to question the

value of this meaning when the sensation of pleasure or reward is a product of our brain and its processes. Ultimately, it is the brain that interprets and translates experiences in terms of reward, but this does not diminish the importance of the pursuit of reward as a fundamental driving force in our lives.

What determines our behaviors lies in the decisive element, the supreme criterion: reward. This is an inherent component of our nature, whose origin is found in factors of reality. However, it lacks an ultimate reason explaining why this reality is this way. In our actions, we find satisfaction in achieving rewards, and our opportunities in life are defined by the states of reward we can attain. Beyond this, there is no deeper purpose that can be assumed.

The lack of a vital purpose, as an entity with real existence, implies that our existence lacks an ultimate purpose. Nevertheless, we must reject the idea of ending our existence based on this lack of a supreme purpose. Such a course of action lacks legitimacy, as there is no direct relationship between these two points. There is no justification linking the cessation of existence with the absence of an ultimate purpose.

Why, then, have implausible constructs been forged, only to crumble one after another, inducing feelings of misery in individuals? We have created concepts that are difficult to sustain from the perspective of standards, such as free will (understood as the absence of causes) or meaning (as something that exists objectively beyond the subject). Has this endeavor been intentional? Has it been aimed at making people feel vulnerable, inferior, or insignificant?

Reality, as it is, and our own existence unfold the most astonishing opportunities for reward. They provide us the possibility of achieving states of great satisfaction and joy, as well as experiencing peace, serenity, contemplation of wonders, and well-being, regardless of the lack of an intrinsic purpose in our lives. These opportunities are part of our nature and depend on what our brain generates, a result of natural selection and concrete causes. The absence of an ultimate purpose does not imply that these experiences are worthless or should generate feelings of discomfort.

This raises the question: what value does reward hold when it is intrinsically linked to brain constructs? This inquiry reflects a perspective in which the meaning of things gains relevance if it comes from something that could be considered transcendental, that is, a sense that goes beyond the individual. However, it is inappropriate to claim that we

experience illusory happiness due to this circumstance, since, although it lacks a purpose beyond the individual, the brain state that fosters it is simply that: a manifestation. To label it as such is merely a value judgment, and there is no other form of happiness available to us.

When we refer to the absence of meaning, we mean a significance that transcends existence and gives purpose to life in general and to ours in particular. This does not mean we should feel sad or that there is no other purpose, the one derived from our personal goals.

Regarding emotions, I believe they do not determine our purposes. Instead, they prepare our actions (though joy might be an exception, as it could serve as feedback rather than prepare behavior). Additionally, much of our emotional reaction to certain events is conditioned by our assessment of them.

The ultimate criterion resides in reward, which ultimately dictates our actions and the goals each individual sets. It constitutes the final foundation of our thinking and the connections we make between different elements to determine specific ends. States of dissatisfaction or lack of reward increase the likelihood that we seek rewards and act in certain ways. The connections we establish allow us to identify the things that will provide us with reward, and consequently, we act accordingly. Ultimately, all acts involving an action to be taken or a goal to be pursued are based on what rewards us, thus constituting the criterion of choice. Therefore, this element stands as the true foundation of what we call ethics and morals.

To base ethics or morality on an abstract cause that ultimately lacks a reason for existence in reality, and therefore lacks a justification for adherence, does not constitute a solid foundation for supporting ethical or moral conduct. This is because such conduct is ultimately supported by the underlying reward for adhering to these principles. Even ethical mandates from a divine entity, although a person may claim to follow them for that reason, lack an ultimate justification in reality. Ultimately, they do not provide a solid foundation for ethical or moral conduct, as what truly drives human action, despite claims, is the pursuit of the reward underlying obedience to those mandates.

When I speak of reward, it is essential to understand its place in the spectrum of our perceptions. In certain contexts, the reward may not manifest immediately but exerts a determining influence throughout the process. For example, when an individual is

dedicated to discriminating a specific stimulus, this cerebral process may not involve an apparent reward. However, when it comes to discriminating a stimulus in the context of more complex behavior, involving goals and objectives, the entire discrimination process is driven and conditioned by the prospect of obtaining a reward.

It is imperative to distinguish between the set of processes, faculties, and abilities we possess, what we are capable of doing, and the motivations and reasons that trigger or regulate these faculties. Our actions, in this sense, are ultimately based on the pursuit of rewards, according to my perspective. However, each of these processes is governed by particular causes at the cerebral level, such as neuronal organization and biochemistry.

Reality presents itself to us and indicates that, for survival, certain elements, such as obtaining food, possess an intrinsic value superior to activities like reading a book. These valuations are determined by our thinking and are learned over time. Our life revolves around our values, that is, what we consider important and strive to acquire and achieve. Values are closely linked to the notion of purpose, as they shape it. A purpose or goal is a point we aspire to reach because we consider it valuable. Value is established by associating something (which becomes the object of value) with states of reward. Associations play a crucial role in this process, but aspects of our nature also intervene, as some things, due to their intrinsic nature, are almost automatically associated with states of reward. From these fundamental connections, we construct more complex values, which may be rooted in our biology.

There is a limit to using criteria derived from the association of ideas and thinking to establish goals and values. This limit is manifested in the ultimate criterion that underlies choice and preference and, therefore, cannot be chosen or preferred in itself. This ultimate criterion, as I have mentioned previously, manifests as an expression of our nature and the causes that govern it, and I identify it as reward. Ultimately, we seek values, purposes, goals, and ends based on their potential to provide us with rewards.

The process of associating ideas in our mind can identify this criterion, and in reality, there are elements that offer greater rewards than others, and our thinking can discern which they are and how to obtain them. The values we establish in the face of certain events and objects imply the pursuit of something we wish to obtain, and the ultimate reason behind it is the reward. It could be said that, ultimately, reward gives purpose to our lives.

It is important to emphasize that purpose does not exist in reality as an independent entity but arises from the interaction between reality and our capacity for thought, based on certain criteria. For example, the value of something is derived from reality but requires our mind, operating under specific criteria, to establish it. However, the notion of purpose in our lives can be misunderstood. Things do not imply an end ultimately but rather a consequence. The end in our lives manifests as the cause of our actions; we do something with a specific purpose, but that purpose is already in our mind, as it is the cause that motivates the action. The purposes we pursue have their own causes, other criteria that may have been established through specific associations. However, at some point, we reach the ultimate criterion, the ultimate cause of our purposes, the criterion based on which we make decisions: reward and its value in reality and in things.

A state of happiness emerges as a consequence of achieving a value, through obtaining something associated with a state of reward. It is important to note that this does not mean we only experience happiness when we reach a specific end. Even progressing toward a particular goal is an achievement in itself, generating a sense of reward.

We live our lives based on our values, as these only have relevance for each individual in particular, in the sense that only each individual can experience the reward associated with those values. When we pursue a goal, we do not always precisely know how it will lead to happiness. While there is a state of reward associated, the final result may not be guaranteed. However, we persist in our pursuit because the goal itself holds value and embodies the ultimate criterion: reward. It is important to underline that when we live according to our values, we live for ourselves.

The question arises about the value of values if they are determined by a cerebral process. In this question, we express a preference for how things should be, but reality is as it is, and values and goals can only exist in this way. The issue is whether we give value to what is or what is not.

Happiness, understood as a high state of reward, cannot be achieved through any value; it must be a specific, personal value associated with the attainment of happiness. They are intrinsically linked. If we were to separate happiness as an ultimate goal and consider it in isolation, we would detach ourselves from the path to achieve it. The relevant question would be whether happiness, on its own, has value or if its worth

derives from a previously established value. This issue is not trivial because if we could chemically induce a state of happiness without achieving values that generate it, would it truly be satisfying according to the person's judgment? Would it be worthwhile?

Ultimately, there is no meaning or purpose independent of our lives, nor a purpose that extends beyond reality. What we understand as meaning and purpose lies in our own goals and objectives, and their relevance is unique to each of us. This constitutes the true "meaning." Do our purposes have meaning? Ultimately, they do not. Our life possesses meaning because we can establish purposes for our life and actions, which provide direction and reason for our actions, that is, our purposes. However, we cannot assign a purpose beyond our purposes that gives them meaning, apart from our ultimate reason in life, which already resides in the individual as the cause of their actions. Yet, this ultimate reason lacks meaning beyond itself; that is, there is no purpose or reason that transcends the ultimate cause ultimately.

Essentially, our ultimate purpose is linked to specific causes, but ultimately, these causes simply exist; there are no infinite causes, and the ultimate criterion constitutes a limit beyond which there are no purposes. Asking about the meaning of our purposes would be absurd, as they arise as a mere consequence of something that has no ultimate cause, and they are not means to a purpose that goes beyond life itself or reality, as no such "beyond" dimension exists. There is no meaning that transcends life and reality, and this is the essence of my previous statements, derived from the inherent limitations of existence.

When we pose the question "what is the meaning of life?", the answer is that it lacks meaning in that broad sense. However, the relevant question is "what is the purpose of a particular human life?", and when I speak of a purpose, I do not refer to something beyond life, but to a purpose related to life itself, a purpose that acts as a limit, determining the causes of all the individual's goals and actions.

Hence, our actions originate from causes, which represent the ends or goals that an individual pursues, i.e., what is associated in their mind as an objective to achieve. The mental process of association allows us to establish these goals or causes, though only through a criterion. Ultimately, however, we reach a limit, the ultimate criterion that manifests simply as an inherent characteristic of our life and our biological nature. I identify this ultimate criterion with reward. All our possible emotional states, such as happiness or self-esteem, are sought because we are beings who pursue reward, and

these states can be considered states of reward. Our brain operates in such a way that these states manifest. Although it has been stated that survival is the primary objective that organisms like us seek, it is important to note that surviving or acquiring what allows us to survive is ultimately a means to achieve the manifestation of reward. This is the true pursuit of organisms and is intrinsically associated with survival. Without reward, we would not survive.

The lack of meaning as an independent entity in reality has specific consequences based on our criterion of meaning. According to my stance, while there are objective moral or ethical judgments based on a criterion or condition and founded on certain associations considered reflective of relationships in reality, there are also ethical and moral notions that lack foundations in reality, meaning they are based on concepts that do not exist in reality independently of subjects. Furthermore, attempting to justify certain ethical criteria in a reality independent of subjects is erroneous due to the lack of meaning in reality.

Morality and ethics do not possess meaning as entities in reality, as this would imply the existence of an unoriginated ultimate cause, which lacks sense. Ultimately, facts simply are. A limit is established, and no ultimate purpose is found in reality. Everything we consider ethical or moral depends on a purpose, a criterion. Something is considered good or bad according to a condition or criterion, and this criterion does not exist independently of reality. What is considered good or bad depends on the individual, as it is the individual who establishes the purposes.

For the individual, there exists a defined limit in the criteria and causes governing their actions, even though this limit is intrinsically tied to their own nature and acts as a reward factor. In the case of reality, where the criteria are external and exist independently of individuals, when we trace the underlying causes of a criterion, we encounter the inherent limit of reality. If this reality imposes a criterion that we are obliged to adhere to, we find ourselves unable to escape it, just as we cannot escape the concept of reward. However, if the criterion is a choice that we may or may not follow, there is no reason in reality, beyond individuals, that supports the necessity to follow it. At this point, we are not dealing with a criterion but with a limit.

When ethical principles or duties are established, these principles imply direct ends or must be supported by a cause or criterion. Otherwise, what would be the justification for following them? One can provide a reason, but if it is claimed that the principle

resides in reality independent of the individual, then there is no reason to obey it, as reality presents a limit, and at that point, the criterion that would justify the principle no longer exists. Even though one might feel obliged to follow it, if its application is optional, reality offers no reason to comply with it or not.

All ethical and moral propositions ultimately derive from a human nature that seeks reward, even the highest ethical principles and duties that are presented as the correct course of action. These ultimately depend on the criterion that resides in human nature: reward.

Phrases like "Help thy neighbor," "Act in a way that results in good consequences," "The greatest good for the greatest number," and "Act according to the maxim that you would wish to become a universal law" are all the result of what has proven to be a source of reward for individuals. However, whether a particular principle or value effectively leads to a significant state of reward in an individual's life is a different matter. While something may grant us reward, it does not necessarily guarantee a continuous state of reward in the long term.

We often evaluate what is considered good or bad based on the direct benefits or harms to the individual. However, in many cases, the same situation can be good for one person and bad for another, leading to a relativization of morality, as it is individuals who establish the criteria.

It seems there is no absolute moral or ethical truth, meaning a universally valid truth for all people at all times. This would imply an a priori condition, a notion that would be deduced as necessary for any individual at any time and place, and even for all conscious beings. However, a morality based on the way reality presents itself is questionable, as reality ultimately lacks purpose or meaning. There is no intrinsic end or purpose in reality that can ground an absolute morality. What is considered good or bad depends on specific criteria or ends, but reality itself is amoral. Beyond a certain point, things simply exist. If there were a limit as a purpose, there would be no reason to follow it in reality, as there would be no causes beyond that limit to support it; it would depend solely on individual choice to carry it out or not.

However, I do not intend to argue that due to this situation, there must necessarily exist another type of morality or ethics based on a notion that makes it universal. If such a thing must exist, it must have solid foundations.

Throughout history, it has been shown that what was considered right in one era was considered wrong in another, and vice versa. Some might argue that there is an underlying moral principle in the behavior of individuals across different eras, independent of what people at a given time consider good or bad. However, good and bad as abstract entities do not exist, as they are mental constructs that vary across generations.

Reality itself lacks valuations of goodness or badness; it simply exists, regardless of our opinions about it. Our perception of good and bad, over generations, is closely related to what benefits or harms people. Therefore, there is no ultimate foundation in reality that supports morality, although following moral principles can help maintain a society where harm is minimized, and well-being is promoted. Nevertheless, morality or ethics lack an authority that makes them an absolute principle, as such a notion has no solid basis. Therefore, it is argued that all decisions on moral issues should be fundamentally pragmatic.

However, it is worth questioning whether we can truly separate our theoretical conception of morality from our moral practice. It seems impossible to do so, as moral practice reflects the pursuit of our individual interests, which appears to be the true theoretical foundation of morality. But we must remember that all this is rooted in relationships of things in reality and is based on a criterion derived from this relationship. Individual interest, which is explained in more detail in later propositions, relates to the pursuit of reward. The reality is that our nature, influenced by biological factors and their interaction with the environment, leads us to act to obtain rewards (a phenomenon that can be scientifically explored). Therefore, our moral behavior is based on this reality, or rather, it is a manifestation of this dimension of human nature. Ultimately, what we pursue is reward (and we seek to achieve higher states of reward, as reward always acts as a motivator). Avoiding punishment makes sense from this perspective, as it implies achieving a state of greater reward than the alternative. The pursuit of individual interest does not necessarily imply competing with others, as it can also include voluntary, non-coerced collaboration with others to maximize the well-being of all parties involved.

The hypothesis of the existence of a God could lead us to consider the possibility that God grants authority to morality and ethics. However, there are substantial difficulties with this approach. First, it would be necessary to address the cause of God

that would justify His authority, which would lead us to an infinite regression of causes unless we claim that God lacks causes, which is equivalent to addressing the question of the primordial form of reality and existence. From this perspective, the moral values promulgated by God would be arbitrary, and moreover, God would not "promulgate" any value in reality in the sense of establishing them, as He cannot do so given His condition as a form. In the sense of acting as a cause, God would not be the ultimate justification of morality.

On the other hand, there is the proposition of the absence of God, which is the simplest explanation, although not necessarily logically obligatory. One could argue that, in the apparent absence of conclusive evidence for the existence of God, we might be using an argument based on something that does not exist (even if it is impossible to prove) to justify something that would automatically lose its foundation and authority. However, as I pointed out earlier, even if God existed, this would not be a solid basis for morality or ethics. The notion of morality and ethics as abstract entities independent of individuals would find no support. It is important to remember that if we are subject to a limit in reality, whether it be God or not, it does not change the fact that we would be limited in our capacity to act; the criterion would be carried out regardless. However, if it is something we can choose to follow or not, then there is no ultimate reason in reality to adhere to an ethical principle.

Morality and ethics are intrinsically dependent on individuals. We can evaluate the morality of an action based on well-being, for example, because it is a premise we can agree upon to assess actions according to our psychology. However, this premise lacks ultimate meaning; it is a principle sought by consensus, as the majority seeks well-being. Even though we may judge an action as immoral by this criterion, it is difficult to prevent individuals from choosing what would be considered morally correct according to the established criterion in certain circumstances. Therefore, we must strive to prevent such situations from arising in the first place. This is relevant because today, special attention is given to extreme moral situations, but these do not undermine the importance of the ethical principle in question. Rather, the problem is that, in those circumstances, fully adhering to the ethical principle becomes impossible, rather than a supposed failure of the principle or criterion itself.

The justification of what we call ethics and morality cannot transcend the individual, as all moral judgment and value are based on the individual. What is

considered "right" or "wrong" depends on a criterion established by the individual. Many people agree that it is ethically reprehensible to kill another individual, but if it is done in self-defense, when one's life is seriously threatened and no other viable alternatives exist besides killing the aggressor, the justification for this action refers to psychology, biology, the ideas and values we establish, and ultimately, the underlying criterion: the pursuit of reward. There is no intrinsic necessity in reality to carry out such an act; if it is done to protect the lives of others in a specific situation, and one does not value their own life, the importance given to this action arises from one's own perspective, not an absolute dictate of reality.

The concept of negative or bad is a label we assign to certain things, but it is a construct created by us, based on our associations. What we consider negative varies depending on who applies the label, as it depends on individual criteria. We can only objectively determine if something is negative or bad based on a criterion. However, the criterion itself is not objective in reality, in the sense of being an abstract entity independent of subjects (as discussed in the second part of this work).

Nature itself is not intrinsically good or bad; these concepts are human constructs based on mental associations, existing only in the minds of individuals and not independently outside of them. Our notion of value largely originates through our associations with things, and value is closely linked to states of reward. An object or action acquires value when associated with a desired reward state, and these reward states are experiences that exist within the minds of individuals, not in the external world. Therefore, nature itself is not intrinsically good or bad; these value judgments are human and subjective.

An illustrative example is air. We call a mixture of gases "air," and consider it polluted when it contains elements harmful to our health. We say it is "bad" for us, meaning we can only objectively establish that it is bad based on a criterion that defines bad as harmful to the individual. However, polluted air itself is not intrinsically "bad" or "good"; it is simply a fact of reality. The valuation is a human construction, and the fact itself lacks moral valence in the external world.

Similarly, the valuations of what we consider "normal" or "abnormal" do not have an objective existence in reality. Facts in reality lack intrinsic value; people establish what is "abnormal" or "pathological" based on defined patterns. These definitions are subjective and depend on how we define those terms. What we consider "abnormal" or

"pathological" is based on the associations we attribute to those terms, which exist only in the minds of individuals.

It is important to note that it would not make sense to label natural disasters or any other events as intrinsically "good" or "bad." The designation of "bad" or "good" reflects how such events affect us and is based on our subjective perception of their impact on our lives. From the perspective of objective reality, events are what they are; value judgments in our lives are a human construction and reside in our minds. In our perceptual experience, whenever we perceive something, such as a color or a shape, we are experiencing a "quale" that originates in the external reality and is processed by our brain. This implies an interaction between the external reality and our brains. Our perception is shaped by both genetic factors, insofar as certain biological structures have evolved to respond to specific aspects of reality, and by experience acquired throughout life.

In this sense, it could be said that the world or external reality expresses itself through our brains, both through genetic influence and through experiences with the environment. Subjects construct their experience of emotions, values, aesthetics, and morality, as these aspects depend on brain states that do not imply entities in objective reality but reflect reality as we perceive it. This does not imply that reality depends on us and only exists when we perceive it, but that the expression of reality in our brains is the way it manifests for our lives. However, the emotions and feelings we experience come exclusively from our minds. For example, when we observe a work of art, what we perceive is the light that strikes our retina. The feelings and emotions we experience while contemplating that work are not inherently present in the light emanating from the work itself; instead, they arise from the interpretation and processing in our brain, and not all individuals experience the same emotions in front of the same artwork. Emotional responses vary—some may feel indifference, pleasure, boredom, dislike, among other reactions.

The common perception of something as "beautiful" can be partly explained by the fact that all individuals possess nervous systems that function in a similar manner. Additionally, cultural and social influences can lead many to share a fairly similar criterion of beauty. However, even if beauty is considered a property that arises from a particular combination of visual stimuli, it remains to be answered why some people

find something beautiful and others do not, if beauty originates directly from the external world.

The answer to this question lies in the fact that, ultimately, beauty is subjective and depends on the mind of each individual. The perception of beauty arises from the interpretation and processing in the brain of a particular individual. Beauty is not an intrinsic property of objects or stimuli in the external world, but a quality generated in the mind of each observer. Even if beauty arises from the combination of discrete points of light, the appreciation of that beauty is subjective and depends on individual interpretation.

The valuation of aspects of reality is, therefore, intrinsically relative, as it depends on individual perception and processing. In this sense, valuation is not necessarily absolute but relative to the perception and appreciation of a particular individual. While relativity may diminish if all individuals share a similar perception, the notion of beauty remains relative and dependent on the perceiving entity, rather than being an objective property independent of the observing mind.

The value we assign to what we consider beautiful, good, bad, moral, or immoral is intrinsically relative to the perspective of an individual subject. These value judgments depend on a criterion that each individual establishes, and this criterion is personal and subjective, not objectively perceived in the external reality. Even if several individuals share a similar criterion, such as the pursuit of reward, each one can experience reward from different things, leading to different valuations. Despite the possibility of defining a general parameter that describes what generally leads to high reward states, there are still multiple individual paths to achieving these states. As a result, individuals may agree on what is beneficial for everyone, but their evaluations may differ based on the individual ways they achieve those reward states.

When many people agree that something is "bad" or "wrong," it is generally due to the similarity in their nervous systems and shared experiences, which influence the formation of a common standard of what is "bad" or "wrong." However, claiming that a value is absolute, such as the belief that "the end does not justify the means" or that "killing is wrong," can have implications that prevent actions which, based on a particular situation's criteria of benefit, would be considered correct. This highlights the relativity of moral and ethical values, as what is considered moral or correct can vary depending on the circumstances and individual judgment.

The term "duty" refers to the idea that there is an internal or external imposition that compels us to perform certain actions. This imposition can come from internal elements, such as our own evaluations and beliefs, or be imposed by external factors. However, there is also the conception of "duty" as an abstract notion in reality that must be obeyed. Ultimately, this abstract notion has no independent existence in reality, as it lacks intrinsic purpose or codes of conduct. Such concepts depend on a criterion established by an individual and exist in that person's mind; they do not have an independent existence at an ultimate level. In this sense, moral or ethical "duty" does not exist as an objective entity in reality but is an expression of associations generated by individuals; it is subjective.

Our moral judgments are based on our criteria, which in turn depend on our associations of ideas, beliefs, and values, rather than being grounded in emotions. Emotions can be seen more as reactions or manifestations of our values, ideas, and beliefs in relation to reality. When these aspects are reflected in reality, they can trigger emotions.

The existence of exceptions to absolute ethical notions reflects the subjective construction of these notions by people, depending on their psychology and nature according to a criterion. For example, one might consider killing to be wrong, but in a situation of self-defense, where there are no alternatives and one seeks to protect one's own life, one might not consider it wrong, as personal life represents a greater value in that context. This underscores the subjective nature of ethical notions and how they depend on circumstances and individual judgment.

The issue at hand revolves around the justification for seeking the maximum value. One could argue that this implies, in reality, a rule to follow. However, reality fundamentally lacks reasons to do A or B, as it lacks intrinsic purposes. Therefore, the question arises as to how criteria for possible exceptions are established. Ultimately, criteria are determined by individuals. We could claim that in case X, the rule changes and a specific action would be wrong if we pursue a certain objective, or based on a particular criterion that dictates such a condition. But this objective is pursued by the individual, as reality lacks intrinsic objectives. In reality, there are no fundamental criteria or purposes. Ultimately, we reach a boundary that simply "is," without any inherent purpose; everything else is a consequence of what is, not an end in itself.

However, considering an act as intrinsically good or bad, regardless of individuals and their values (considered as an abstract entity separate from oneself), could serve as a justification for an individual (though not necessarily) to impose their notion of what is good or bad on others, regardless of the opinions of other individuals. This could be the basis of a dictator's or despot's morality. Relativism could also lead to the idea that acts considered negative by some people are part of a particular group's culture and are not inherently good or bad, but are considered good for that specific culture, even though others may perceive them as negative. Moreover, it is true that acts beneficial to some people may be valued as negative by another culture, and attempting to impose change by force could result in a negative impact on the affected people. Ultimately, we can only evaluate whether an act is good or not based on a criterion.

Therefore, the notion that "killing is wrong," whether absolutely for all cases or only in specific circumstances, does not find an ultimate justification in reality, as there is no intrinsic reason in reality to follow or not follow such a rule due to the lack of fundamental purposes. In individual purposes, we find reasons to perform actions, but ultimately we face a boundary involving the criteria of each individual's choices, and as such, it cannot be chosen. Ultimately, the causes of such criteria simply "are," without reasons beyond them. If an individual pursues a particular objective, they can determine whether something is right or wrong based on that objective, but the objective is determined by the individual, not the ultimate reason or criterion, where everything else is a consequence. The fundamental question, then, is whether it would be appropriate to impose an individual's criterion of what is right or wrong on all subjects, regardless of their particular objectives or purposes.

We can note that there are guidelines for handling these absolute principles, so that in specific situations, these principles are applied in a particular way or not applied at all. However, it is important to emphasize that rules are established by individuals, and these rules are equivalent to criteria. In reality, criteria do not exist per se; they depend on each individual's mental associations, as reality lacks fundamental purposes.

An individual might establish the absolute principle of "no killing" and also assert that "the end does not justify the means." However, the question arises whether it would be morally justified to kill a person under certain circumstances. For example, if an individual is holding a group of people hostage and is about to kill them all unless he is

killed first, would it be permissible for the end to justify the means? In this context, is it truly "wrong" to kill the individual?

The truth is that nothing is "truly" right or wrong in the sense that these evaluations exist solely in the minds of individuals. In reality, things are not subject to intrinsic ethical or moral judgments; their morality or ethics depend on individual mental associations. In the mentioned case, one might establish as a criterion that in that particular context, the act is justified, but this can only be stated objectively based on a criterion or condition, for example, if the aim is to maximize general well-being.

In this specific case, one could propose a rule that indicates minimizing possible harm, which would lead to the conclusion that it would not be morally wrong to kill the individual, as the act of killing would be justified by the ends pursued.

In this case, what is relevant is not so much the principle itself, but the underlying reasons that ensure adherence to a certain course of action. There is always the possibility of finding situations where principles like "no killing" or "the end does not justify the means" encounter exceptions, and individuals establish other criteria according to the circumstances, which we call rules. A question that arises is: why does our mind consider the act of killing unacceptable?

When it is argued that "the end does not justify the means," it is pertinent to question why this principle is upheld. Delving into this, we enter the realm of personal criteria, which ultimately lack justification in reality and depend on the individual in question, as reality lacks absolute concepts of good or bad.

However, it could be argued that following this rule is beneficial in practical terms, meaning what we consider "bad" is that which causes harm to individuals, and conversely, "good" is what benefits people. Therefore, the terms "good" and "bad" represent realities based on facts about human psychology, but they do not have an objective existence in reality beyond our individual perception.

Language often leads us to confusion, as it seems to imply that "good" or "bad" exist as objective entities in reality, independent of individuals. Given the previously mentioned example, one might wonder if, in the case of an individual holding a bomb detonator and about to cause the death of many people, it would be wrong to kill him if there is an opportunity to prevent him from activating the bomb and save the lives of

many people. In this situation, wouldn't the end, which is to save lives, justify the means of killing the individual?

Indeed, in reality, we do not find an intrinsic answer as to why it would be wrong to justify the means by the ends, since reality lacks a fundamental "why" ultimately due to its inherent lack of purpose (as previously discussed). Ultimately, the reason why something is a certain way turns out to be purely arbitrary, as the only necessity comes from the individual through their criteria, which are established by the subject. These criteria can consist of the opposite if the individual so determines, that is, that the end justifies the means if they decide so.

Even if we claim that, regardless of the criteria, an action is always ethical or not (as good or bad), we do not escape the notion of criteria, as to establish what is ethical independently of people's criteria, we need a reference criterion. What we could argue is that as human beings, we tend to seek rewards and states that benefit us, and we could try to establish a common criterion that applies to all people to define what is "right" or "wrong."

However, we cannot guarantee greater well-being by defining what is best to do in a given situation based on any criterion, as we might end up considering as "good" something that, according to the psychology of most people, is harmful to individuals. The diversity of criteria and the variability of the perception of well-being make it difficult to find a single definition of what is "right" or "wrong" that is universally accepted.

I am not advocating moral relativism in the sense that all criteria have the same value for an individual. My argument lies in the incorrectness of considering an absolute morality backed by abstract entities in reality, as such entities, criteria, purposes, and ends do not have an ultimate existence in reality. Facts themselves cannot be labeled as "good" or "bad"; they are simply facts. However, this does not mean that I would consider a harmful act towards an individual to be "not wrong" just because in a specific culture it is considered normal. It may be normal within that culture, but from my ethical and moral perspective, it would not be considered right.

The nature of our psychology might seem constant in appearance. A person can experience different emotions toward the same event due to cultural influences that shape their perception. However, causing physical harm generally results in pain,

regardless of the culture. This is because human suffering tends to be a universal experience, except in exceptional circumstances where a specific culture has significantly shaped its members' perception of pain over time.

Considering this, I can offer a perspective more aligned with reality concerning the dilemma of whether the end justifies the means. In my ethical approach, I maintain that if we pursue an end using morally just means, then there is no dichotomy between the end and the means. In my ethical framework, I consider self-esteem and happiness as ends, and according to my particular criteria of both concepts, acting with self-esteem and happiness as goals implies refraining from acts of deceit, coercion, aggression, or endangering the lives of others. The only exception to this rule could be legitimate self-defense in situations where there are no alternatives. Consequently, it is not appropriate to speak of an end justifying the means when the means contradict the ultimate objective, which is the cultivation of self-esteem and happiness.

What is commonly referred to as morality is, in reality, a concrete concept intrinsically linked to self-awareness and the pursuit of rewards, which influences the determination of individual goals. However, the way this process manifests in people varies significantly. Some individuals find greater reward in exercising control over others, while for others, leaving others in peace is more gratifying. Since people pursue different things that provide them personal rewards, different criteria for what they consider ethical or moral emerge.

While human suffering is universal and undesirable, allowing it to occur is considered immoral. However, this consideration is not based on abstract notions or universal truths about what is moral or right. Instead, each individual's morality is based on their definition of what is moral and the foundations they use to arrive at this definition. In this sense, morality is subjective and depends on individuals' perspectives and how their consciousness works, which may or may not be shared.

There is no abstract and absolute morality that exists independently of the people who construct it. Morality seems to depend on what each individual considers it to be. However, this raises the question of what happens when someone harms another and justifies their behavior by claiming they can define it as moral. In this case, we enter the realm of society, which must be governed by certain norms to ensure the coexistence of its members. If a consensus is reached around certain principles, such as the preservation of individual freedom in a free society, then individuals must adhere to

these principles if they wish to be part of that society. Deliberately harming another individual would infringe on that person's freedom by imposing one's desires over the other's. Therefore, individuals must respect general principles that promote well-being and freedom, as it has been established that these are preferable to discomfort. If someone's actions do not conflict with these general principles, then there will be no issues with what that person considers moral or right.

On the other hand, when we consider that the basis of our perception of certain principles and behaviors as moral lies in our emotions, questions arise about how to address those people who, in certain cultures, inflict harm on others and do not experience a sense of "wrong" due to the cultural and social influences they are immersed in. Emotional responses and feelings we experience depend on the evaluations we make of situations. In other words, our emotions and feelings are the result of our assessments of facts and specific conditions. This implies the existence of associations between an event and our emotions and feelings since emotions and feelings are triggered through the associations that the event evokes, given that these states are linked to that event.

These evaluations depend on the individual associations each person maintains, meaning the connections they have established between different elements. While emotions can prepare behavior (though joy might be an exception), feelings provide us with a guide on the degree of reward that certain situations can generate. However, from my perspective, the criterion for determining what is moral is based on the reward rather than primarily on feelings. That is, it is not about the feelings that do not constitute states of reward themselves, as the ultimate motivation for our behavior lies in the pursuit of rewards, many of which can be described as states of reward. Therefore, what is moral depends on facts and objects associated with states of reward, which are sought due to their ability to generate reward in the individual.

An individual may associate a specific fact or object with a state of reward, but it is important to note that this reward may be immediate and short-term, while, in the long term, the constant pursuit of this fact or object may lead to states of dissatisfaction and suffering. Some things may generate reward but do not necessarily lead to high levels of reward, such as self-esteem and happiness.

When an individual prioritizes immediate rewards without necessarily considering higher states of reward, situations may arise where certain acts that could be deemed

atrocious—such as the mutilation of children and women in certain countries for cultural or religious reasons—are justified from that individual's perspective. This occurs because the pursuit of reward is closely tied to each person’s specific associations and beliefs. If an individual does not find some level of reward associated with such acts, they are less likely to commit them. However, for that individual, refraining from these acts may lead to a state of dissatisfaction due to the cultural or religious beliefs they have been exposed to.

This issue will be explored in the following propositions. The dilemma arises when we consider the possibility of adopting a cultural or social relativism where whatever provides reward becomes the norm, regardless of whether it involves higher states of reward. This does not seem to offer a satisfactory solution for establishing a criterion of what should be considered right in a socio-political context, especially in relation to institutions like the State. Nonetheless, it is important to highlight that the victims of these acts almost always experience pain, discomfort, and suffering, which are not relative and are based on our human nature. The question then is whether this observation is sufficient justification for determining what is "right" or "wrong."

Understanding that some actions can lead us to higher or lower states of reward, or even to our own long-term destruction despite providing immediate rewards, is a crucial step in enhancing the former. In this sense, morality and a sense of purpose are not abstract entities that exist outside the individual; rather, they depend on individuals and what they find rewarding. One could argue that these issues should be considered from a pragmatic perspective, based on a criterion. However, is it possible to separate theory and practice and act in a contradictory manner?

One could argue that avoiding the suffering of others is a moral act, not because an absolute truth dictates it, but because it brings benefits to us. Regarding rights, some argue that they do not exist and are merely inventions. Others, however, contend that these inventions are useful and should not be discarded. It is important to note that this issue can have serious political consequences and affect human relationships. The specific criteria for rights do not exist independently of the individual, but what is associated with the notion of "rights" can indeed exist outside of oneself. For instance, the characteristics of an object deemed beautiful can exist independently of the observer. However, in the case of rights, since they generally refer to human beings and their behavior, if there were no humans, there would be nothing associated with "rights"

independently of subjects, as rights are intrinsically linked to human existence. In summary, the criteria for rights do not exist outside the mind of the subject, but what is associated with rights can exist objectively and independently of individual opinions.

Various fundamental rights have been proposed, such as the right to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and property, though often lacking solid justifications for respecting these rights, or the existing justifications have been insufficient. For example, it is argued that the right to property is necessary to ensure a person's survival, which is true, but this does not imply that everyone must exercise this right to its fullest extent. A person can keep another alive by force and in captivity, which can also apply to the right to life and liberty. Similarly, absolute property is not necessary to ensure a person's subsistence. It has also been argued that property is related to the pursuit of happiness, but it is important to note that not all actions leading to happiness require owning great properties, like living in a mansion, for example. From this perspective, one could argue that certain actions should be denied to people and others should be imposed coercively.

My argument is that essentially, the notion of higher states of reward should be considered the primary guide to avoid such conflicts and disturbances of property rights, as I will discuss below. The denial of property rights, except in the limited exceptions I mention, goes against these states of reward and therefore opposes achieving the utmost we can in life, as no other argument, individual desire, need, or ideology can surpass human nature in terms of motivation. It may be that a person prefers a reward at a specific moment over another that would result in a more lasting state of reward in the long term, but this does not change the fact that one reward implies a higher state of reward than the other at a given time.

The conception of rights that favors the individual should focus on high states of reward. We can develop a notion of rights that applies to all living beings, which might lead us to conclude that it is inappropriate to feed on other animals, as they also possess certain rights. However, if this restriction hinders the pursuit of high-value rewards, which is one's ultimate goal, then we must advocate for the defense of the individual (though we do not necessarily claim that this restriction is the cause).

As noted earlier, it is common to hear the idea that rights are a fiction, that they do not exist in themselves but are human creations, dependent on the concessions and permissions granted by a State. However, this largely depends on how we define the

concept of rights. Rights exist independently of individual opinions at any particular moment if we understand them as an expression of possibility. Possibility of what? In this context, it refers to the ability to use spaces and objects for personal purposes, which constitutes the right to property.

Following the criterion that a right implies a possibility, and considering that the right to property implies the ability to use spaces and objects for personal purposes, we can assert that this right exists, regardless of an individual's opinions at any specific moment.

Now let's consider the commonly mentioned rights. These rights imply a possibility, which is generally understood as the ability to act. Although there are some differences in this interpretation, if we conceive of rights in this way, then rights exist, given that people constantly perform actions to achieve their goals. This does not disappear entirely, as if someone prevents another person from acting, the ability to act is required to deny that restriction. Therefore, we could assert that the right to life, for example, is the ability to carry out specific actions aimed at preserving one’s own life. The right to the pursuit of happiness refers to the ability to undertake actions directed at increasing enjoyment, well-being, and satisfaction in life, which includes high states of reward.

The supposed "right to freedom" might seem redundant under the previously mentioned criterion, as both the right and freedom refer to the possibility of taking actions. Both terms imply the ability to carry out actions, which in turn relates to the pursuit of high states of reward. In a sociopolitical context based on the defense of the individual as a means to allow the attainment of high-value rewards, the only obligation of third parties towards the individual and vice versa is negative. This means that no positive action is required, but rather that one should not obstruct others in their pursuit of maintaining their lives and pursuing their goals.

Now, we can simplify the so-called rights to life and the pursuit of happiness into a single fundamental right, which would be primary or even unique. To understand this, let's consider the notion of property. From my perspective, property is of utmost importance because it involves the use of objects and spaces to achieve our goals. Essentially, owning something means that it is designated for our own purposes (according to my criteria), and without this notion of property, achieving states of reward becomes impossible.

When we reflect on the right of property, what we are really considering is the ability to use spaces and objects for our personal purposes. Action, at its core, requires a space where it takes place and often involves the use of objects for specific ends. Therefore, action presupposes the ability to use certain spaces and objects for our personal purposes, and this ability to use spaces and objects in line with our own ends relates to the idea of property. In short, to act is to use spaces and objects with the aim of achieving personal goals, which in turn is linked to the right of property.

Thus, when the right of property is questioned or minimized, what is really being denied is the ability to act. The prior notion of property is intrinsically tied to the idea of rights as possibilities. The essential right to which all other rights can be reduced, or even considered as mere manifestations of, is the right to use spaces and objects for our personal purposes. Property does not disappear completely; as I mentioned before, if someone is prevented from acting or using spaces and objects for their purposes, the affected person must be able to act and use spaces and objects for that purpose. It is possible to deny this right to someone, but the right of property and its defense in the political realm imply supporting the individual when their property is denied.

However, this right has its limitations in situations where higher states of reward are compromised, as will be discussed later in the context of conflict resolution. The lives of minors are protected to the extent that their guardians' property is extended and subject to protection, and intervention occurs in extreme cases during conflict resolution.

When we take actions, we are essentially employing certain spaces and objects to achieve our goals. If we are denied the ability to use certain spaces and objects for our own purposes, our capacity to carry out any enterprise would be severely compromised. Indeed, without the notion of property, the foundation of all other rights vanishes; everything converges on property.

The right to property entails the ability to gain control over certain spaces and objects, where "acquire" means that a space or object is used for our own purposes. For this to be possible, one must start with some form of prior ownership, as actions cannot be carried out without someone having some degree of control over the resources involved. Whether the state or any other entity allows individuals to act and carry out actions to preserve their lives and seek higher states of reward, or whether they do not, does not affect the existence of these rights. In other words, rights do not cease to exist,

and actions remain a part of reality, regardless of whether individuals can act to achieve their goals.

This conception of rights, understood as possibility and property, and their defense in the socio-political context, can be seen as manifestations of an individual's desire to seek higher states of reward and to protect themselves if these are denied. The criteria for rights do not exist as independent entities, separate from the individuals who conceptualize them, and lack justification in reality that is not rooted in the perception and action of subjects. One might argue that rights reflect the psychology of individuals, as they often represent concepts that promote well-being, for example. However, there are certain conditions in reality that we can consider essential for an individual's survival, such as the ability to access food. One can establish as a right the possibility for a person to obtain food by themselves or in collaboration with others, and if this right is guaranteed, a fundamental condition for existence is established while sanctioning, in society, any attempt by individuals to limit this possibility for others.

The right can be conceived as a fundamental condition for existence, according to this approach. However, a problem arises with the notion of rights when a specific criterion is used, as it could lead to conflicts when this conception is imposed, given that imposition is an inherent element of the notion of rights. This can conflict with the possibility of another individual acting according to their own purposes, which implies the possibility of using certain spaces and objects. What one person considers as rights for an individual may differ from what another person considers as rights. At some point, the criteria of both parties may conflict.

People orient their lives according to their own criteria and goals. High states of reward do not necessarily require many of the established notions of rights, as these notions can limit the pursuit of rewards since they often involve specific criteria. Many consider these rights to exist in reality, independent of individual perspectives, but, in essence, they refer to social constructs that do not necessarily reflect objective elements of reality.

When I mention "objects," it's important to understand the role information plays in this context, particularly an individual's personal information, such as their name, address, and activities. In an individual's daily life, this information is primarily used by the individual themselves but originates mainly from the individual's property or, in the case of a minor, from the property of their legal guardians. The possession of this

information is based on the specific use of the individual's property, and therefore, any use of this information by third parties for purposes contrary to those of the individual who owns the information could be considered a violation of their property.

This issue of personal information becomes relevant in cases of defamation, for example. One could argue that personal information can be used as a measure to establish a defense or protect someone from a conflict previously established by the person who owns the information. Although the person in question may disagree with the use of their personal information, this could be seen as an act of self-defense or defense of others in response to a conflict initially instigated by the person who owns the information. Ultimately, this is considered a way of using the personal information of an aggressor and their accomplices for defense purposes.

Indeed, we have established that morality and ethics can be based on elements that represent relationships both in objective reality and in abstract concepts that do not exist in this same reality. Nevertheless, the criterion that supports such morality is always established by the individual. A crucial aspect that has persisted throughout history is the questioning of the individual criterion that governs a person's actions, with the premise that every criterion is based on obtaining a reward.

This dilemma is particularly evident when an individual, acting based on their own criterion, obstructs another individual's ability to use certain spaces and resources for their own purposes. In some cases, we might even say that a subject is denied the opportunity to act according to their own goals. Here lies the root of many of our social problems, where the predominant criterion in individual actions often favors rewards of little value and short-term gains, resulting in long-term destruction and suffering. This criterion prioritizes imposing over allowing other individuals to use spaces and resources for their personal purposes.

In light of this, it seems that our moral values originate in the nature of our biology, with reward being the ultimate criterion underlying decision-making. This reward can be identified through reflection and observation of reality. Thanks to our thinking and our ability to analyze the environment, we can identify what brings us well-being and reward, which in turn determines our future goals through the association of concepts and experiences.

Given that satisfaction and well-being can vary significantly among individuals, the notion of individuality emerges as a highly relevant concept. Well-being, along with the notions and goals that constitute personal rewards, is not necessarily uniform for everyone, and consequently, group well-being is an abstract concept, since, as mentioned earlier, the abstract itself lacks existence, and only concrete relationships between elements that refer to reality can be considered as such. In the context of a group or society, the genuinely real entities are the individuals that compose it.

However, this does not imply that there is no universally applicable aspect to all individuals, such as a state of high reward like self-esteem. The way to achieve this self-esteem, in my view, lies in what one is capable of accomplishing, which is often a complex process that distinguishes each individual from what others can do or from what one was able to do in the past. It is essential that these actions foster one's life, in the sense that they do not inherently harm it or carry a high probability of harm based on the action itself. Moreover, these actions should not lead to a predominance of suffering and discomfort, as the goal is to reach a state of enjoyment associated with them.

In the case of activities that, despite their complexity, lead to the destruction of one's life, the reward does not manifest in the long term and is therefore not consistent with the pursuit of high reward states. Although there may be some reward in these actions, it makes no sense to act based on the criterion of high reward states when these actions go against the maximum possible reward. It is preferable to opt for actions that, although presenting certain risks, preserve one's life, are favorable to it, and avoid its destruction. People can engage in activities that involve certain risks, as long as these activities do not inherently lead to the destruction of life without practical alternatives.

I am not referring to the promotion of others' lives necessarily. For example, surviving on a deserted island does not necessarily imply promoting others' lives. This observation also applies to the notion of happiness, as well as to self-esteem. Happiness involves values that are in harmony with one's own life and contribute to it. In other words, my conception of self-esteem refers to a state of gratification linked to the complex actions one can undertake, distinct from the abilities of others, and beneficial to one's own existence.

Happiness, on the other hand, implies a state of reward related to things that are not necessarily linked to individual abilities but provide satisfaction. However, it is

important to highlight that, ultimately, a level of self-esteem, either directly or indirectly, is required to achieve these things that contribute to happiness.

It is essential to distinguish, as I will discuss further, between acting in accordance with the cultivation of self-esteem and happiness, and acting in pursuit of the maximum possible reward given the circumstances. In the latter case, it may happen that the consequences of the action aimed at such a reward endanger one's life. However, in extreme situations, one might consider that this option generates the greatest personal reward. For example, if one risks their life significantly to save their children in a dangerous situation (refer to the discussions where I mention extreme cases).

In my view, self-esteem and happiness represent the highest reward states that a human being can experience. We can consider that this has developed over the course of evolution as part of our nature. What one can do to favor their own life, such as ensuring opportunities for survival and reproduction, is associated with a reward state that has become ingrained in our biological structure.

Alternatively, we can analyze how, during our development and in the present, we establish quick connections with concepts such as survival, hierarchy, social integration, novelty, and other aspects. In this case, self-esteem refers to the complex actions one can undertake in relation to these aspects, representing the reward for achieving a certain level of survival, hierarchy, social relationships, and the like. It is worth highlighting that, concerning the association with the notion of hierarchy, what is crucial is the ability or capacity to deal with the challenges arising from occupying certain positions in socioeconomic or social hierarchies, for example.

Regarding the more complex actions that generate satisfaction and are related to the benefit of one's own life, we find a connection with fundamental elements of our nature. These elements have been shaped over the course of evolution and have solidified in our development as human beings. They manifest in an increase in the probabilities of survival, improvements in the probabilities of reproduction, and other related aspects.

It is important to emphasize that self-esteem is not intrinsically linked to status, in the sense of feeling superior or having a belief in superiority, nor to the effects that may arise from hierarchy, although they may be biologically related. Essentially, the purpose of self-esteem is not to determine who occupies a superior or inferior position in terms

of specific skills or behaviors. This hierarchy is secondary to the determination of what should be done in pursuit of reward states or what enables these states.

A hierarchy of skills may be established in a particular domain, as otherwise, it would not be considered a complex achievement compared to others. Nevertheless, self-esteem can persist even if everyone is at the same level because each individual has the capacity to accomplish something complex that differentiates them from the skills of others.

On a more general level, the critical factor is that hierarchy is secondary or, one could say, only a part of the complete notion of self-esteem. This means that self-esteem is not based on judging oneself as superior to another, but on the capacity one can deploy, essentially in their ability to face the challenges of existence, and this is associated with personal reward. Although someone might fall into the belief of their superiority over others, this is irrelevant to self-esteem. In this sense, the end product of self-esteem focuses on oneself.

A person's self-esteem and happiness could increase in a society where people exhibit exemplary and complex behaviors. An individual with self-esteem does not require others to be considered "inferior" to feel "superior." For example, it is not possible to gain self-esteem by destroying another's capability, which would result in establishing a hierarchy where one occupies a superior position. This is because no complex behavior or particular skill has been demonstrated, but rather another's skill has been destroyed.

Furthermore, a person with certain complex skills does not necessarily feel superior to another who is developing their skills, simply because they occupy a higher hierarchical position in that sense. As I have mentioned, this would not be the case. I even suspect that, in many cases, the natural associations we make between hierarchy or status and reward are more due to the ease of obtaining other things, such as material goods or the removal of obstacles for certain purposes, than to hierarchy itself.

Each individual seeks a domain or set of specific areas where they can create, produce, and express what they are capable of doing. However, the general essence of this pursuit is the same for everyone: to perform complex actions that distinguish them from others, especially in terms of competence, and to experience long-term satisfaction and reward, ultimately benefiting their own lives.

Not all activities that one can perform, which distinguish them from what others can do and ultimately promote an improved quality of life, generate a uniform level of reward and well-being. Consequently, for a particular individual, there is an activity or set of activities that are more closely associated with a higher reward.

It is important to highlight that even if certain basic needs, such as survival and reproduction, are met, neglecting the cultivation of self-esteem would lead to a life with a lower level of satisfaction. Self-esteem manifests independently of certain levels of satisfaction and presents itself as a constant element in our experience. It can be debated whether self-esteem has a direct association with these needs or if its manifestation might be related to the configuration of our nature. However, self-esteem manifests as its own entity without requiring a higher level of satisfaction in terms of survival, reproduction, etc., every time a more complex action is performed. Therefore, I prefer to assert that self-esteem involves performing complex activities that foster one's own life without destroying it. The crucial issue lies in the fact that one can continue to cultivate self-esteem, as stopping at one point could result in a lower level of reward in one's life. In summary, self-esteem, along with happiness, constitutes states of maximum reward and manifests as such in our experience.

We can imagine going back to primordial times and visualizing the most skilled hunter of the tribe. This individual was the foremost provider of food, significantly contributing to the prosperity of both their own life and that of their community. They were admired for their skills and achievements, enjoying a high degree of respect within their community. This hunter exhibited notable self-esteem, independent of the admiration of others. Their self-esteem was based on their ability to perform complex activities that benefited their life and that of their community.

This same principle can be transferred to modern times. Self-esteem is cultivated similarly to that of the hunter in ancient times, through what one can achieve in a complex manner, distinct from what others can do, and enriching one’s own life. This is accomplished through creation, production, developing special talents, seeking independence, and honing skills, among other aspects. In ancient times, increasing self-esteem meant aspiring to be like the prominent hunter, achieving their accomplishments and capabilities. Today, the process is similar, as it involves emulating competent and creative individuals of our era.

On the other hand, denying self-esteem in the times of the hunter equated to destroying achievements and capabilities, which in turn led to a denial of life. Anyone who hindered the best hunter in performing their tasks was denying their self-esteem, resulting in a decrease in the provision of food for the tribe and ultimately in a decline in the quality of life for everyone. The individual who denied self-esteem experienced a lower reward, as they were not dissatisfied with their own abilities, but they also did not have the reward they would have obtained had they achieved being like the skilled hunter. Additionally, the tribe suffered from the lack of food, affecting its overall well-being.

This same pattern repeats in modern society. Those who engage in activities not based on skill development but on limiting others end up denying self-esteem, both their own and that of others. This results in a lower long-term reward. These behaviors also reflect a lack of independence, which in turn demonstrates a lack of self-esteem. In contrast, the skilled hunter of ancient times was capable of achieving things independently and did not need to control others. They were able to perform more complex actions and favor their own life, which translated into independence. Dependence, control, and imposing limitations on others are contrary to self-esteem, as they imply an inability to perform complex actions and develop one's own skills. Those who adopt these behaviors establish a relationship of dependency where their success heavily relies on what others can do, without developing their own skills or contributing to personal goals through the exchange of their capabilities.

The independent individual surpasses the dependent one in terms of capacity for action. The dependent individual is largely conditioned by the actions of others to satisfy their desires, while the independent individual achieves the satisfaction of their desires through the cultivation and development of their skills and competencies. Moreover, the independent individual also participates in exchanges with others, leveraging the capabilities they have cultivated. This prior relationship of dependency is counterproductive to self-esteem.

In contrast, the controller, the individual who does not seek high self-esteem, finds satisfaction in exercising control over others and undermining their self-esteem. This helps us understand the significance of pursuing or not pursuing high reward states in a socio-political context.

Additionally, there is a problem with the criteria of excellence and perfection, often considered ethical standards, such as "Arete" in Greek philosophy, in relation to our actions and goals. These criteria can lead to more suffering and discomfort than benefits, as they often generate constant dissatisfaction and pressure to achieve perfection, which can overshadow well-being and affect the ability to enjoy an activity. The cultivation of self-esteem should not lead to this dynamic, as it does not imply an obsessive pursuit of excellence or perfection, but rather a focus on enjoying activities that generate rewards. The performance of activities that bring rewards should be gratifying in itself.

A significant distinction between high reward states and concepts like excellence or perfection is that the former are obtained through actions performed and achievements attained, making them more accessible. In contrast, the notions of excellence or perfection often generate constant expectations and the pursuit of more achievements, which can lead to an accumulation of dissatisfaction.

It is possible that, under certain beliefs and motivated by momentary rewards of limited scope, one might forgo the pursuit of long-term high reward states. This behavior is often influenced by social norms and beliefs that present certain actions as correct, which ultimately do not lead to gratifying long-term results.

Historically, societies have often promoted the idea that doing the "right" thing brings rewards, while doing the "wrong" thing is associated with negative consequences and suffering. This can lead to manipulation and the adoption of behaviors that don't necessarily lead to high long-term rewards. Sometimes, the belief is instilled that favoring certain actions, even if they go against individual interests, is the "right" thing to do, and thus satisfaction is associated with performing these actions.

Conversely, what truly leads to high states of reward can sometimes be labeled as "wrong," creating internal conflict. Although initially there may be a sense of discomfort after taking actions that contradict one's interests, people often seek comfort in the idea that they are doing the right thing.

However, it's important to recognize that what is considered right or wrong isn't necessarily based on universal principles, divine mandates, superior wisdom, or immutable truths. In many cases, these notions of correctness have been developed by individuals over time and may have been rewarded for various reasons, far from

constituting access to absolute or universal truths. Therefore, it's crucial for people to reflect on and question these beliefs to determine whether their actions truly lead to high long-term rewards or if they are being influenced by misguided concepts of rightness and reward.

Sometimes, people may be motivated by rewards that, despite being immediate or short-term, don't necessarily lead to high reward states in a broader sense. For example, drug abuse or theft may be linked to short-term rewards but don't contribute to a life characterized by high reward states.

Similarly, valuing something greatly and associating it with high reward states doesn't necessarily guarantee that a person will act accordingly. When making decisions and taking actions, multiple factors come into play, including personal beliefs, values, and long-term considerations. For instance, someone might disregard what they value if motivated by the belief in negative long-term consequences, such as potential torment in the afterlife.

This dilemma can also arise in health-related situations, like a hypertensive person being tempted by the immediate pleasure of consuming salty foods. In these situations, the ability to focus attention and concentration on what is valued and to adequately weigh short-term rewards against long-term rewards plays a crucial role in decision-making.

It's important to distinguish between short-term pleasures, which are a legitimate part of a life in pursuit of high reward states, and actions that deny the possibility of achieving high reward states in the long term. The key is to avoid allowing short-term rewards to undermine the potential for attaining high long-term rewards, as in the case of a hypertensive person who consistently abuses salty foods.

Moral principles often based on minimal short-term rewards, combined with superficial thinking and a lack of precise identification of causes, have been subject to attempts at justification as abstract entities in reality. If there were an abstract entity in reality dictating, for example, "always help your neighbor," and this principle could not be a matter of choice, we would be compelled to follow it unquestioningly. However, if it is a principle that can be followed or not, there is no intrinsic justification in reality for adhering to it. Ultimately, this would lead us to question why we should "always help our neighbor" and seek a criterion to support this mandate. Yet, we cannot

indefinitely seek justifying criteria, as we would lack a solid basis for such a search. Therefore, there must be an ethical criterion limit that simply is.

An ethical criterion as a limit in reality, which can be followed or not, differs from an imposition we are compelled to comply with without options. If there is no possibility of choice, there would be no reason to follow it, as we would lack criteria and justifications to support it. This challenges the utility of any ethical justification based on abstract entities in reality, such as mandates or duties, as they would not fulfill their function.

The true limit of our ethical criteria is the inherent reward in our nature. We are compelled to follow this limit and cannot choose it. However, an individual can choose to follow high reward states that endure long-term or seek minimal short-term rewards, which can result in long-term destruction and suffering. This concept is essential for establishing criteria in resolving interpersonal conflicts and in socio-political relations.

It is crucial to highlight that humans have the potential to achieve high reward states. This potential refers to the inherent capacity of people to grow and develop, without knowing with certainty what the future outcome will be. It is about recognizing that there is the possibility of achieving high reward states in people's lives, which can manifest over time. This perspective focuses on human potential, as most people have the ability to learn, acquire knowledge, reason, and generate new ideas. It is likely that most can achieve goals using their intellectual and physical abilities. The achievement of these goals will be determined by future events, but essentially, it is recognized that humans have the intrinsic capacity to carry out these actions and achieve high reward states.

On the other hand, in reference to the mention of God, when we affirm that God gave origin to humanity and the environment that surrounds us, we are indicating that in the context of the history of our universe, no other option can be considered. God, in this context, cannot escape His own nature and acts in accordance with it, determining what happens. Similarly, an individual's criteria will influence their future well-being or suffering, and they cannot deviate from their own nature.

On the contrary, it would be incorrect to assert that people lack the potential to achieve high reward states, experience self-esteem, and find happiness, even in difficult situations. Human beings possess immense potential, as they are capable of thinking,

learning, making informed decisions, and much more, thanks to the capabilities of their brains. Therefore, it is essential to explore how far we can go in life, recognizing that only the future will reveal the results of our efforts and actions.

A morality based on rewards is founded on the justification of actions through reality, meaning that these actions find support in elements existing in the concrete world. Justification manifests through the axiomatic premise of reality, which establishes that any act deviating from this fundamental premise lacks meaning in terms of its connection to what is truly real.

The cornerstone of this moral perspective lies in reality itself, discarding abstract notions that lack tangible existence. However, it is important to highlight that morality is intrinsically tied to the subjectivity of each individual, and the aforementioned criterion, which focuses on achieving higher reward states, is considered positive from the ultimate perspective of preference. This preference is manifested at the moment of decision-making, where the reward associated with the action in consideration plays a fundamental role.

It is worth mentioning that people have the ability to guide their lives according to their own criteria, regardless of whether these criteria relate to aspects of concrete reality. However, what underlies the notion of "actions based on false notions" is ultimately the reward these actions bring to the individual.

The possibility of establishing an objective morality has been a subject of deep reflection by many. Firstly, it is imperative to define the term "objective." As previously mentioned, morality and ethics do not present themselves as abstract entities that exist independently in reality, detached from the realm of individuals. Ethical criteria do not exist outside the minds of subjects, and ultimately, there is no intrinsic reason in reality that justifies the performance of a particular action. Therefore, this aspect cannot be considered the objective element in the context of morality.

Instead, morality should be understood as a phenomenon that connects both individuals and the reality around them. Morality and ethics objectively emerge only from a determined criterion, which entails the challenge that such criteria defining what is moral and ethical can vary and conflict among different individuals. This variability and contradiction essentially originate from what each individual perceives as a source of reward, with reward being the foundation giving rise to various ethical criteria.

It is important to highlight that there is no ultimate reason to impose one individual's criterion over another in our interactions with others in reality. However, we can conceive of objective morality in the sense that the criterion is based on relationships of existing elements in reality, allowing us to eliminate abstract notions lacking foundation in tangible reality.

When we refer to morality, we are actually talking about actions. The existence of good and bad actions implies a distinction between moral and immoral acts. However, it is crucial to consider that the goodness or badness of an action can be defined arbitrarily, in the sense that it depends on a criterion established by an individual, as previously argued. Morality, according to my approach, is based on a criterion that refers to existing elements, exempting it from considerations of an "abstract ought," as the "ought" ultimately lacks existence in reality. Following this "ought" without an underlying reason implies acting according to a mental construct of some individual, rather than following the individual's ultimate criterion: the pursuit of reward.

Actions, in essence, constitute the observable behavior of an individual in reality. This aspect is inherent to reality and does not represent an abstract or non-existent entity; it directly refers to observed conduct. The challenge lies in the ends, purposes, or criteria supporting such conduct. It is feasible for an individual to adopt a criterion not rooted in relationships between existing elements of reality, meaning it is not based on basic premises with tangible existence. However, the action of such an individual, even if claimed to be based on such a criterion, will ultimately depend on the criterion of reward, which is the true driver of certain criteria and, ultimately, the individual's behavior.

Given what has been outlined, it's impossible to establish objective morality in terms of duty, obligation, right or wrong, good or bad, just or unjust, and similar concepts as abstract entities existing outside of subjectivity. Ultimately, reality lacks an intrinsic purpose that could determine what is moral or ethical. In reality, there is a limit to intrinsic purpose, and if we were bound to follow it, we would lose the ability to choose. However, if we have the choice to follow it or not, then there is no ultimate reason to do so, as this limit becomes apparent.

Individuals cannot justify their actions in ethical terms as entities of reality that exist independently of them, outside the notion of cause and effect. That is, actions can be explained in terms of cause and effect, at least within the context of structural causes,

but an action ultimately cannot be ethically justified as an independent entity in reality. This justification lies beyond reality and ultimately does not exist, as a purpose, criterion, or cause that determines an action cannot be deduced from the very nature of reality. The justification for an action is an instance that is beyond reality, which means it does not exist, as nothing can be found outside of reality. In most ethical dilemmas, actions generate conflicts when they clash with the actions of other individuals.

The evaluation of something as "good" or "bad," "right" or "wrong," is intrinsically linked to the definition we give to the terms "good" or "bad," "right" or "wrong." Similarly, determining whether something is ethical or not depends on how we define the term "ethical." While it is feasible to make objective judgments about whether something is ethical, this is only possible based on a criterion that, ultimately, does not exist as an independent entity in reality beyond the individual. This criterion is a construct of the individual and lacks autonomous existence outside the subjective sphere.

A statement related to morality or ethics may refer to relationships between elements of reality that are associated with the notion of ethics. However, this association has no independent existence in reality outside the individual. As mentioned earlier, the key point is that the ethical lacks meaning if the criterion itself is transferred to reality and claimed to exist independently in it, beyond the individual who maintains this association.

Everything we assert about ethics and morality depends on a particular criterion. It is possible to objectively discuss what is "right" or "wrong," "good" or "bad," but only based on this criterion, which ultimately does not have autonomous existence in reality independently of the individual, but is a personal construct.

The notions a person holds about what is ethical guide their actions and life. These notions may or may not correspond to reality. That is, even though the criterion does not exist independently in reality outside the subject ultimately, what is associated with the term "ethical" can have a real existence. However, it is also possible that what is associated with the term "ethical" does not represent relationships between elements of reality. If one maintains that there are abstract principles or "duties" in reality, independent of subjects ultimately, to which one must adhere or use as a guide for their actions, they would be defining what is ethical or not. However, what is associated with that term does not correspond to reality, as ultimately, such principles or "duties" do not

exist in reality. These notions are generated by individuals. If we propose a duty or obligation as an intrinsic purpose in reality, there would be no reason to follow it, if we have the option to do so or not, since there is no criterion beyond the limit that justifies such a purpose. There is no ultimate duty or obligation that serves as the basis for such a purpose. One can be aware of this and consider that they should guide their life according to a certain principle, but they would not do so blindly, but with a reason that corresponds to reality. However, the criteria that guide what one should or should not do, even if they do not refer to relationships between elements of reality, and the individual's actions, are fundamentally based on the ultimate criterion of the subject, that is, their reward.

The ends or purposes pursued by an individual, which ultimately determine their actions, can be considered the domain of ethics and morality, according to my criterion. In other words, it is possible to establish this criterion. What is considered "right" or "wrong" depends on the goal one pursues and derives from the individual's criterion. The notion of what is "good" or "bad" originates from a criterion or condition, for example, "if my goal is X, then action A is right" or "if my conception of the good is X, then action B is wrong." It is plausible that different individuals may consider the same action ethical or not, as their criteria may vary. This is evident in the wide diversity of ethical theories that present multiple criteria for what they consider "right" or "wrong." In these theories, it is possible to determine objectively what is "good" or "bad," but only in the context of the criterion being applied. Believing in the existence of something that is intrinsically "good" or "bad" or that an action is "good" or "bad" independently of the criterion is a mistake, as previously stated. Our judgments are based solely on a criterion, and the possibility of that criterion being applicable to all subjects is a separate consideration. One can determine what is better or worse for people according to their own criterion.

People's actions constitute the realm of ethics and morality, at least from my perspective. Each individual determines what is right or wrong based on their own criteria and objectives. Often, ethical theorists focus on defining the criteria to determine what is "right" or "wrong" to guide people's lives. However, to consider one criterion better or worse, we must start from another criterion, which becomes the superior criterion to which others are subordinated. This is because the notion of "better" can only be defined in relation to a criterion.

Nevertheless, there is a fundamental criterion underlying all individuals' actions: the pursuit of reward. Ethical theorists have formulated criteria without identifying the underlying cause, which involves, at least to some extent, obtaining rewards, at least for the author of such criteria. We cannot escape this criterion of reward, as our actions are motivated by what rewards us. The key lies in understanding that there are different levels of reward we can aspire to, and based on these levels, we can establish what is better according to what really determines the ethical criteria and actions of individuals: the reward, and the degree of reward we can aspire to.

Many contemporary ethical dilemmas revolve around our interpersonal interactions. These dilemmas arise when an individual's actions, driven by their own goals and moral criteria, clash or conflict with the potential actions of another individual, motivated by their own goals and criteria. However, it is more precise to say that the action of one subject prevents another subject from using objects and spaces for their respective goals. This is based on the premise that an action presupposes an environment in which it takes place, thus implying the appropriation of a space or object to achieve certain objectives. As previously mentioned, this involves a question of property, which is essential for the feasibility of any action.

In situations of conflict, imposing an action that denies another individual the ability to use certain spaces and objects for their own purposes ultimately involves the appropriation of those spaces and objects for the goals of the conflicting agent. In reality, there is no abstract justification that can invalidate an individual's right to maintain ownership of something, that is, the ability to determine whether an object or place can be used for their purposes. Individuals' actions invariably involve objects and spaces, and those who seek to maximize their utility will tend to defend the concept of property, which implies the ability to use objects and spaces according to their personal goals.

In such conflicts, reality lacks an independent criterion to establish the preeminence of one individual's objectives over another's, or vice versa. There is no ultimate foundation to legitimize the imposition of certain goals over another person's ability to use spaces and objects according to their own ends. The fundamental question that arises is: how should we approach such conflicts, and by what criterion?

In the ethical realm, one can speculate about what is most beneficial for an individual in the absence of conflicts, but when conflicts arise, ethical questions require

rigorous evaluation. However, if reality ultimately lacks goals or purposes, and there is no inherent criterion within it, the question arises of how to face conflicts under an ethical framework. What criterion should we employ? How should an entity like the State act, if such an entity should exist? According to what criterion?

We find ourselves at the crossroads of choosing between living life to its fullest or limiting ourselves to a minimal existence. Opting for the fullest realization involves defining the elements that constitute a full life. Ultimately, what we deem grand or valuable in the context of a full life is associated with the idea of a fundamental "is," devoid of ulterior causes. Achieving this state becomes the ultimate goal, beyond which any further pursuit would be illusory and impossible. This is the true objectivity that underpins our purpose-driven actions and represents the essence of a meaningful life, which finds its direction and purpose in this notion.

In the realm of human relationships, what truly matters are the actions and behaviors of individuals. Morality refers to a person's conduct based on end-criteria, which constitute my own perspective on morality. These end-criteria represent the cause, while the action manifests as the effect, and the ultimate criterion acts as the reward that guides an individual's actions. Escaping this logic is impossible.

Ethics and morality in individuals' relationships with others only become relevant when actions based on one individual's end-criteria come into conflict with another individual's ability to use resources and spaces according to their own criteria. Here lies the paradox: ultimately, reality does not provide a definitive justification. There are no ultimate purposes in reality to support any of the positions at stake. At the deepest level of reality, we find no reason to impose or defend the position of the affected subject. Justification claims collapse because we lack fundamental criteria to determine which criteria, or which approach of one subject or another, should prevail, given that there are no definitive criteria in reality. One could argue that the actions based on A's ends should be imposed over B's possibilities, but this would be based solely on a personal criterion, without an ultimate justification in reality. The determination depends entirely on personal criteria.

It is plausible to propose possible solutions, such as adhering to the principle of "the greatest good for the greatest number," respecting the maxim of "treating a person as an end in themselves and not as a means," or seeking "the best possible consequences." However, none of these alternatives is based on an objective justification that transcends

the subject's ultimate influence. The essential point in this context is to understand that all these options, as well as the actions taken and the criteria of the individuals involved in the conflict, are rooted in the criterion of reward, which is an inherent part of the subject's nature and represents their critical limit. The variation in reward preferences among different individuals explains why they act based on different incentives, according to the intensity and value they assign to certain rewards.

In decision-making, a subject can impose their action or abstain, while another can choose to defend themselves or not, depending on the impact such actions have on their respective rewards. Since the reward acts as the ultimate criterion for the subjects, the question arises as to which reward should be considered a priority in a conflict, whether from an individual perspective or that of an entity like the State, to determine the appropriate action in that situation. If ultimately, what prevails are the rewards of one subject or another, how should the decision-making of an individual or a state entity be guided? Under what criterion?

Our motivation to carry out actions is intrinsically linked to the notion of reward, which derives from reward states or their association with certain stimuli. These reward states can vary in terms of intensity, duration, ability to ensure long-term enjoyment, or, on the other hand, can lead to suffering and destruction. Individuals have no inherent obligation to act, and ultimately, they only undertake actions when they perceive that these will provide them with a reward.

Consequently, each individual faces a choice between two alternatives: the pursuit of elevated states of reward and the preservation of the ability to maximize what life can offer in terms of reward, according to their own criteria, or the choice to disregard these considerations and face a life of suffering and decay, or even settle for a middle ground that does not reach the maximum potential of existence. These are the available options, without any intrinsic reason in reality to justify any of them ultimately. However, if we aspire to reach the maximum potential of life in terms of reward, it is imperative to follow the path that leads us to higher states of reward, as detailed in the proposals that follow.

Ends are mental conceptions that originate from the association of ideas in the minds of individuals and are determinants of their behavior and actions. The nature of an end can vary depending on the case and may represent a personal value, the fulfillment of a duty, among others. However, it is important to note that ends lack

intrinsic justification in a reality beyond the human mind; instead, they find their justification based on the reward they promise. The fundamental question is whether pursuing a particular end leads to the attainment of elevated reward states.

Action based on ends often requires deliberation on the part of the individual. For example, in the context of survival (as an end), an individual might consider various options, such as acquiring food, gathering fruits from a tree in a forest, stealing from someone, or trading possessions for food. In situations where the individual is aware of these possibilities, stating that stealing is the necessary action that invariably derives from the end of survival contradicts reality, as there are viable alternatives.

The justification of conduct lies in the cause, that is, in the end or objective pursued. It is important to keep in mind that an individual may have ends in their mind but does not necessarily carry out the actions required to achieve them. The problem of conflict arises in the context of ends and actions, specifically regarding the use of spaces and objects to achieve certain ends. It is relevant to consider this aspect in situations where individuals are willing to act to achieve their ends, not just when they are limited to having ends without the intention of taking concrete actions.

When individuals use spaces and objects without denying others the possibility of employing those same objects and spaces for their own ends, there is no conflict. It is essential to understand that objects and spaces can serve an individual's ends, and they can acquire ownership of spaces and objects that are not intended for others' ends (as long as it is with the consent of the other party), meaning they are not the property of other people. It is also possible to acquire ownership of something that belongs to another through agreements where both parties agree that the item will be used for the ends of the individual who receives it. In these cases, conflicts do not arise, as the possibility of using spaces and objects for one's own ends is not denied.

It is important to point out that the claim that there is conflict because one cannot use what belongs to another, as if what belongs to another automatically belongs to oneself, is unfounded. In reality, there is no ultimate justification establishing that something intrinsically belongs to someone. This is often forgotten in statements suggesting that "resources belong to everyone," "property is universal," "nobody owns anything," or "everything belongs to society." However, my intention is not to highlight an excessively possessive notion of property, especially without considering the interdependence that exists, as we are part of what could be considered our property.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognize that one must acquire ownership of something and, if desired, defend it if it proves rewarding. This is facilitated in a socio-political context that guarantees such a possibility.

The acquisition of ownership of an object can be achieved in two distinct ways: through peaceful resolution or through confrontation. The choice between these two options is directly related to the pursuit of higher rewards. In the absence of conflicts, the acquisition of ownership of an object aligns with higher reward states, while confrontation with others translates to the denial of these reward states. The individual's attitude toward conflict will depend on whether they follow the path of higher reward states or not, and whether they choose not to actively establish conflicts when seeking to achieve these states, as will be discussed in the following points.

It is imperative to highlight that, ultimately, reality lacks a defined purpose or end. This principle extends to the notion that there is no end that establishes ownership without resorting to a specific socio-political system or that prevents the use of objects based on a particular individual. The acquisition of ownership of an object is justified based on the reward it brings to the individual.

In the context of a conflict, if someone uses a specific object or space for their own purposes without having established conflicts with others, this use should not be denied. This refers to impositions, which, in turn, are based on individuals' actions according to their own goals, which are also based on rewards. Ultimately, there is no justification in reality that establishes the priority of one end over another (when two individuals are in conflict), implying that one end has priority over another for reasons outside of reality, that is, nonexistent.

For example, in a competitive environment, an individual might make it difficult for another to get a job due to their greater suitability for the required task. However, at no point is the other person’s ability to seek employment and apply for the same position interfered with, meaning they are not denied the opportunity to pursue their goals or use objects and spaces for their purposes. What actually happens is a change in the nature of the environment in which the person was pursuing their goals. Preventing the more suitable person from being hired would conflict with the employer’s interest and their ability to use spaces according to their own goals, such as making choices based on their own judgment within their scope of action. Ultimately, it would be unjustified for one person's goals to prevail over another's, as there is no justification in

reality that determines one person's goals have priority or precedence over another's. The unjustified imposition would ultimately come from the party actively hindering the other's ability to act according to their goals and use objects and spaces for their purposes, as in the case of the less qualified individual preventing the employer from hiring their choice.

It is plausible that the exercise of self-esteem by an individual might result in a decrease in rewards for another. As I mentioned earlier, in the context of obtaining a job, the competitor would not get the desired reward and might experience negative feelings about it. However, it is important to recognize that this possibility exists and must be accepted. Acting based on self-esteem does not prevent this situation from occurring. In this scenario, no reward is being denied through conflict, nor is the other individual's ability to use spaces and objects for their purposes being eliminated. The individual who did not get the job still has the opportunity to improve and seek other opportunities. The alternative would be to return to a past where every innovation, improvement, or increase in capabilities that influences self-esteem was prevented because it eliminated the need for another's work. This would lead us to a primitive society rather than the modern world, where self-esteem can be cultivated and rewarded more broadly.

When an individual's actions involve another through a voluntary agreement by both parties, without coercion, deceit, or falsehood, no conflict arises between the parties. An objective is set, a behavior is carried out, and there is no conflict from another individual. Conflict arises when someone's actions interfere with another's ability to use objects and spaces according to their own goals. If one acts with the intention of harming another, their behavior takes on an active stance, while the individual receiving the aggression maintains a passive stance in this context until they decide to defend themselves. Defense is justified in the sense of preventing aggression and the use of force by another individual. However, what justifies the action of the individual who goes against the possibility of action of the attacked individual and their ability to use objects and spaces for their purposes? The way to avoid conflict is through voluntary agreement.

The justification for an individual's actions that harm another being sanctioned by a nation's justice system lies in the need to maintain social order and preserve peaceful coexistence. When someone acts aggressively or interferes with another's ability to use

objects and spaces according to their own goals, a conflict arises that can undermine social harmony and create insecurity. Establishing legal limits and sanctions for such actions is essential to ensure an environment where citizens can pursue their goals without fear of violence or unjust imposition.

It is important to note that the aggressor's actions are based on their own ends but lack ultimate justification in reality, as there is no fundamental reason to prioritize one end over another. Both the aggressor and the victim do not find ultimate justification in reality for their respective objectives. The issue at hand relates to the conflict between individuals' actions; when there is no conflict, there is no dilemma. Avoiding the dilemma involves avoiding conflict between subjects, which is a key point of contention in human relations.

In this dynamic, there are two key aspects: avoiding conflict and defending oneself if conflict arises. The choice between these two options depends on the individuals involved. Those who understand the importance of higher reward states will tend to avoid conflict with others and, if caught in a conflict, will seek to defend themselves against aggression if feasible. Defense does not find its justification in reality itself but in the objectives and criteria of the individuals involved. The struggle occurs between the imposition of one individual's goals or criteria in their actions, which triggers the conflict, and the defense of the assaulted individual, who opposes the aggressor's interests.

Thus, an individual can justify their aggression based on their goals, but the assaulted individual can justify their defense to ensure their ability to use objects and spaces according to their goals. When an individual appropriates what was originally intended for another's objectives, a conflict arises, and the affected individual will seek to defend themselves if possible, supported by the pursuit of higher reward states. It is essential to consider that the individual who initiates the imposing action and triggers the conflict exhibits an active attitude, while the individual who experiences the consequences of this action maintains a passive attitude in this context until they decide to defend themselves.

From the perspective of higher reward states, eliminating conflict requires suppressing the initial source of the conflict, that is, the active attitude of an individual who initiates an action. In this context, a scenario of "0" (the subject receiving the aggression) versus "1" (the one initiating the action that causes the conflict) is proposed.

Although defense may generate conflict by opposing the aggression of the individual who originated the conflict, there is no ultimate justification in reality to prioritize "1" over "0." Given the absence of ultimate ends, there is no reason to give priority to one over the other. However, eliminating the action of "1" resolves the conflict, while any other solution would be detrimental to higher reward states.

In this context, resolving the conflict means that the aggressor stops imposing their objectives through their individual action, without the action of another creating an imposition of defense, which would constitute a conflict with the aggressor. Although there is no ultimate justification in reality for defending oneself, the assaulted individual has a strong reason to do so, as they seek to guarantee higher reward states or their capacity to pursue them. It is crucial to understand that there is no ultimate justification in reality for the action based on the aggressor's goals and criteria to have priority over the assaulted individual's goals and criteria.

The notion of "no-justification" in ultimate reality for the action against another that originates a conflict implies that there is no justified prioritization; that is, ultimately, reality lacks a reason for action based on certain goals to prevail over another subject's goals. In a conflict, the subjects' interests are antagonistic and cannot be simultaneously satisfied. Choosing one as if it were justified in ultimate reality would be a mistake, as it would not be supported by reality at an ultimate level. Nothing in reality, ultimately, suggests that an action based on certain goals should be considered superior to another subject's action based on their goals.

This notion implies the freedom of individuals to use objects and spaces according to their goals. However, it does not imply an obligation; that is, an individual might impose their action based on goals against another, but it would lack ultimate justification in reality and would not lead to higher reward states. Although one could claim a reason for their action, by directly conflicting with other individuals' ability to use objects and spaces according to their goals, there is no ultimate justification in reality for such an action, based on certain goals, to prevail over others' possibilities. It is essential to identify who initiates the conflict (according to the proposed conflict criterion), the active party (who denies others the possibility of using objects and spaces according to their goals), and the passive party (who receives the aggression).

Certain principles or imperatives can be identified, even though they lack ultimate grounding in reality. We might argue that we should pursue the greatest well-being, but

we then encounter the fundamental question of why we should do so. While we might live under better conditions, we still face the question of why we should strive to improve our lives. Ultimately, we find no answer in reality, as it lacks intrinsic purpose, criteria, and justification in this sense.

Any attempt to explain why a particular goal should prevail over others necessarily involves introducing another criterion, leading us to question why we should impose this new criterion. Moreover, any choice will ultimately depend on the criterion of reward: if the expected reward is minimal and does not lead to a high degree of long-term satisfaction, then it is reasonable to resist engaging in the conflict.

Consequently, the criteria we may establish to determine which option should be considered a priority will ultimately be rooted in the ultimate concept of reward. People may find it more rewarding to follow one option over another in specific cases, but this is based solely on what that choice brings them in terms of personal reward. However, in ultimate reality, there is no intrinsic reason justifying that one option should be considered a priority beyond the nature of the reward it offers.

People seek to achieve certain goals and establish norms about what is right or wrong. These judgments are fundamentally rooted in the ultimate criterion of human preference and action, which we identify as "reward." If this criterion did not exist, or if there were others, one or several reference points would still be necessary. Even when people are not in conflict with each other, they seek to justify their perspectives through various criteria and goals, which ultimately relate to the ultimate criterion of reward.

It is often argued that one position should be considered superior to another, as if it were a mandate of reality, as if it belonged to an objective criterion that existed independently of people, and that everyone should accept that one position is correct for that reason. However, ultimately, there is no intrinsic justification in reality supporting that one position should prevail over another. The priority a person gives to a particular position is based on their own criterion of reward and preference.

In the context of all ethical or moral systems that have been proposed, as well as in relation to the various goals pursued by individuals, none of them find a true justification or are genuinely based on a criterion or end that exists in reality ultimately. People pursue certain goals and establish ethical and moral codes in their lives, and the core of the ethical and moral debate centers on determining which criteria lead to higher

levels of life satisfaction. When one imposes their personal criterion or goal through their actions, restricting the ability of others to use objects and spaces according to their own purposes, a conflict arises. However, ultimately, there is no justification in reality beyond the individual as an abstract being with an independent criterion for this imposition. In the end, these actions are based on the individual's desire, and there is no reason for one to see their ability to use objects and spaces according to their goals subordinated to the desires of others. In defense of their own pursuit of high levels of satisfaction, one has solid reasons to resist and will do so if it rewards them, which is essential for achieving those high levels of satisfaction.

Since people are rewarded by different things, various ethical and moral systems arise, each rewarding those who follow them. In some cases, high levels of satisfaction, such as happiness and self-esteem, can be so powerful that one might choose to avoid conflicts by understanding that they are not the true goal. However, at times, under the influence of more immediate and powerful rewards, one might act counterproductively.

Ethics and morals relate to our actions and the criteria or ends we pursue. Our actions involve using objects and spaces for our purposes, which ties into the right of ownership. The ultimate criterion behind our actions is, indeed, the reward, as what we do can lead to high or low levels of satisfaction or even cause suffering and destruction. Here, a range of possibilities opens up in our lives. Ultimately, there is no reason in reality dictating that we must necessarily follow paths that lead to high levels of reward, low levels, or even suffering. However, when it comes to choosing a criterion, these are the possibilities presented in life.

The key to conflicts lies in the denial of the possibility of using objects and spaces for our purposes when another individual engages in an active action that clashes with our interests. Given the range of possibilities, we would choose to follow the criterion of high levels of reward, as it generally represents the maximum satisfaction life can offer in the long run. Although there is no abstract justification for following this criterion, we do so because of the reward it entails. In a conflict between different criteria, we choose the one that offers the possibility of achieving high levels of satisfaction. This, in turn, influences how we conceive of a socio-political system and a state, as the option to defend oneself in a conflict aligns with the pursuit of high levels of satisfaction.

One of the most crucial aspects lies in understanding the implications of pursuing high states of reward, as this sheds light on what the function of a State should be in the socio-political context. For example, adhering to high states of reward implies not imposing on others in the first instance, unless faced with extreme situations or exceptions that will be discussed later.

While in reality, there is no imperative need to follow these high states of reward, the alternative involves lower levels of life satisfaction or, worse yet, destruction and suffering. Ultimately, the fundamental criterion is reward. By understanding that all our ends are intrinsically linked to this ultimate criterion, we can set aside certain ethical and moral notions that are, in reality, based on the pursuit of reward. Instead, we can focus directly on what interests us: the states of reward we can achieve.

By following the reward and considering various elements, one can seek physical pleasure, reach a state where dissatisfaction and suffering are minimal, or seek self-esteem (which relates to actions that favor our life) and happiness (which relates to certain values associated with states of well-being that we achieve). It is important to note that states of joy and enjoyment are more intense and lasting, given our nature, when they are linked to certain activities compared to others, such as those that contribute to our self-esteem rather than activities generated by other factors.

Under the criterion of reward, high states of reward represent the maximum potential that life can offer us. Reality presents us with a set of possibilities: we can aspire to achieve high states of reward or not. These are the options presented to us in life. Ultimately, there is no necessity in external reality that compels us to seek a particular state of reward. Reality lacks intrinsic ends and criteria; our pursuit of certain states is rooted in our own nature as biological beings.

It is important to recognize that while one person may choose not to seek high states of reward, such as self-esteem and happiness, another may decide to do so. It can be frustrating for some that not everyone pursues these elevated states of reward, but the main issue lies in interpersonal conflict. The discrepancy between reality and our own criteria is one thing, but imposing our criteria on others is a completely different matter, and it is here where the conflict I refer to arises.

The first type of conflict I mentioned arises when reality does not align with our expectations, and some individuals who do not value or promote self-esteem resort to

imposing their will. This results in the elimination of achievements and the limitation of those who do practice and possess a high level of self-esteem. This, in turn, removes competition and makes reality simpler for those who impose their will, but ultimately worsens the situation compared to how it was before. This attitude denies the self-esteem of others and, ultimately, one's own, as it prevents dealing with others through persuasion based on arguments and evidence, which is a more complex interaction than mere force. Additionally, it demonstrates that one cannot avoid entering conflicts with others or that one's own life cannot be rewarding without interfering in the lives of others.

It is relevant to note that self-esteem depends on what one can achieve, which is related to states of reward to the extent that our actions favor our own lives. Initially imposing our will over the possibility that others use objects and spaces for their own ends undermines the self-esteem of others by denying them this possibility and limiting their ability to make decisions that benefit their lives. This also affects our own self-esteem, as it shows that we cannot interact with others through persuasion based on arguments and evidence, and that our life is destined to be a series of incessant conflicts.

Therefore, denying the possibility of achieving high states of reward, both for oneself and others, leads many to deny others the opportunity to use objects and spaces for their own ends. For these individuals, the real conflict they must address lies in their relationship with themselves and their ability to advance toward elevated states of reward.

In the pursuit of achieving elevated states of reward, one can direct reality according to their own standards without imposing on others. This strategy is distinguished by its complexity and its ability to enrich the individual's life, thereby contributing to high self-esteem and the consequent experience of a high level of satisfaction. This approach is based on avoiding imposition, control, and destruction, attitudes that arise from the inability to tackle complex tasks, denoting weakness and having a negative long-term impact on quality of life.

Imposing on others turns out to be a simpler alternative compared to voluntary collaboration among independent beings, while destruction is a more accessible endeavor than creation. These actions reflect a limitation in individual capabilities. Frequently, imposition originates as a defensive response influenced by anger, in the face of what subjects perceive as a threat, even though they do not actually pose a

significant risk. Here, the issue centers on the internal conflict that individuals must address.

Additionally, this perceived threat, which is actually fictitious, further weakens the individual. A strong individual, in the sense of one who cultivates solid self-esteem, is not threatened by events or people that do not present a real danger. Let’s examine sources of imaginary threats that reside in the mind of the individual and the imposition reactions people manifest, such as when they feel offended or find discrepancies in others' opinions. The weakness of oneself, as well as the power that others exert over one by reacting in this way, become evident in such circumstances.

Our society is plagued with laws that sanction individuals for expressing opinions that are displeasing or offensive to others. These laws limit people’s ability to act according to their own judgment, as such judgment is considered discriminatory, among other things. This dynamic reflects low self-esteem in contrast to its promotion and originates in one’s weakness and insecurity. These attitudes are contrary to the pursuit of elevated states of reward.

It is crucial to understand that self-esteem is a personal, not a social, aspect, and this distinction is essential to not confuse it with the intrinsic value of an individual as a human being. In a social comparison, a person's valuation can vary based on their skills or what they are capable of achieving. One might argue that those who demonstrate a higher level of competence possess greater value in this social context. However, this approach lacks relevance when it comes to self-esteem at the individual and personal level, where different factors come into play.

Therefore, we must not confuse the concept of worth with that of self-esteem. On an individual level, all human beings have abilities and the capacity to carry out actions related to personal rewards. In this sense, self-esteem is present in each individual to some extent. What is truly in question is the development of the possibilities of self-esteem, that is, whether one chooses to cultivate it or not. This cultivation will have an impact on long-term self-esteem. It is not necessary for one to foster self-esteem to demonstrate their worth as a human being, and it could even be argued that, on a personal level, self-esteem is already present in each individual. The differences lie in the realization of its potential and the experience of elevated states of reward in the long term.

Furthermore, it is important to remember that self-esteem is a personal matter, and one does not need to demonstrate their abilities externally as a means of proving their worth as an individual. Therefore, it is incorrect to equate self-esteem with the evaluation of career choices, for example. Self-esteem is related to how a person carries out their actions, including their professional activities, regardless of what they may be, as long as they do not impose on others.

In the context of self-esteem, personal aspects are distinguished, as I mentioned earlier. For instance, the choice of activities that promote the development of self-esteem varies among individuals since our educational or career preferences and choices differ. However, it is undeniable that there are universal aspects related to self-esteem, such as our treatment of others and the management of our thoughts and emotions, as these areas are of common interest to everyone.

The pursuit of a high-reward state, in the context of self-esteem, is defined as the ability to perform actions that generate enjoyment, joy, and well-being. This pursuit might be rooted in our nature and relates to mastering reality to ensure our survival, a primitive instinct directly linked to our chances of survival, such as obtaining food. The enjoyment in performing these actions is partly due to the satisfaction we experience when achieving our goals. However, there comes a point where the repetition of the same actions no longer satisfies, which could be an aspect coded into our nature, driving us to seek a higher level of reward by expanding our capabilities. It is important to note that we do not necessarily seek complexity but rather the expansion of what we can do to achieve a higher level of reward.

Self-esteem is linked to the ability to acquire values and experiences that contribute to well-being and enjoyment, which ultimately relate to the concept of happiness. These two ideas are intrinsically connected in my perspective. Moreover, we anticipate and associate the increase in the complexity of actions with greater enjoyment, as opposed to simpler activities that we often consider routine or mundane. Comparison with others plays a significant role in this dynamic, as we evaluate what others are capable of and tend to believe that emulating their achievements does not reward us in the same way as surpassing the norm in our own capabilities. Thus, performing more complex actions and achieving values emerges as the path to high-reward states, in contrast to complacency in the everyday, simplicity, destruction, conformity, or the undermining of

our achievements, which, while they may provide short-term rewards, do not represent a path to high-reward states in the long term.

When an individual hinders another's ability to use objects and spaces to achieve their goals, based on a motive that ultimately leads to a lower level of reward, they are effectively denying the other person the possibility of reaching a state of self-esteem and long-term happiness. Additionally, this action negatively impacts the self-esteem of the individual imposing the restriction, as it goes against the pursuit of the highest possible reward states.

In these circumstances, the individual has a solid justification for defending their interests. If the goal is to achieve high-reward states, which represent the utmost joy and enjoyment in life, there is no reason to submit to the desires of others, especially when those desires undermine one's own happiness and self-esteem. No purpose in reality ultimately justifies one individual imposing on another, as this only serves the personal desires of the one imposing the restriction.

Self-defense arises in the pursuit of higher reward states. There is no objective need outside of oneself that dictates the obligation to defend oneself; the decision to do so is based on the potential to obtain a reward. Even if we consider the opposite perspective, that of an individual seeking to achieve high-reward states but denying another the opportunity to use objects and spaces to achieve their own ends, which does not necessarily lead to long-term high-reward states, the question of the justification for such an imposition arises.

Morality and ethics can be evaluated based on an ultimate criterion, which in this case is reward and its states. The goodness or badness of an action can be determined by whether it leads to high-reward states or lower-reward states. Individuals will ultimately act according to what rewards them at a certain level. If the ultimate goal is to achieve high-reward states and one understands this principle, then they will seek to defend themselves from impositions, as they understand this is fundamental. Why settle for lower-reward states and accept impositions based on the desires of others that lead to inferior levels of reward?

As I mentioned previously, those who pursue high-reward states do not tend to deny others the ability to use objects and spaces for their own purposes. This approach is based on creating harmonious relationships with others, where imposing actions that

restrict others is unnecessary. In fact, the need to impose an action rather than allowing others to use objects and spaces to achieve high-reward states suggests a lack of skill, cleverness, and self-esteem on the part of the individual imposing such restrictions.

It is important to highlight that the ability to persuade another person to follow a course of action that benefits both parties in terms of social interactions requires a higher level of complexity compared to coercion. Persuasion is based on rational arguments and the ability to influence through thought, which helps elevate self-esteem. In contrast, coercion does not foster the growth of self-esteem, as it represents a simplistic approach that does not involve cultivating interpersonal skills.

When coercion is used, others are treated as weak individuals and are deprived of the opportunity to cultivate their self-esteem by following their own paths. This is essential for the development of each individual's self-esteem, as it involves the ability to make independent decisions and act without being forced by others. In fact, coercion involves a dependence on others to satisfy one's own desires, which ultimately places one in a position of lower self-esteem and greater weakness.

Self-defense in the context of not being controlled by others is an act of independence and self-assertion. Remaining under the control of others implies a position of weakness and lower self-esteem, as one submits to the will of others instead of acting according to their own judgment and thinking. Defending oneself and not imposing, therefore, is a choice aligned with the pursuit of high-reward states.

Rejecting the perpetuation of a state of infantilism and dependence through socio-political institutions favors the pursuit of reward states, as it advocates for independence and self-responsibility in adult life. Ultimately, this approach is consistent with the promotion of high-reward states and the preservation of self-esteem, both one's own and that of others.

Living under the submission of others' desires lacks reward, as it involves the denial of personal values and elements that bring satisfaction and happiness to one's life. This denial contradicts the concept of reward because it undermines the pursuit of one's own happiness and self-esteem. Therefore, it is understandable that one would seek to defend oneself and uphold the principle of self-defense, as this implies safeguarding personal reward. From the perspective of a state, its role should be to promote this principle, as living under the influence of others' desires, which deny the realization of

things that bring one happiness and self-esteem, contradicts the pursuit of high-reward states.

It is important to consider that actions can be motivated by something that rewards to a certain degree but does not necessarily lead to high-reward states in the long term. Reality consists of possible states we can aspire to, and these states vary in terms of the amount of reward they offer. When two criteria conflict, one may not be aligned with achieving high-reward states. In such cases, persuasion can be a way to resolve the conflict by explaining why one option does not lead to optimal reward states. In this way, conflicts can be avoided or resolved constructively.

Imposing a criterion on others implies considering them weak and dependent, incapable of directing their own lives autonomously. This attitude disrespects the power, self-esteem, and capacity of people to achieve their values and cultivate high-reward states. Imposing a criterion is detrimental not only to oneself but also to others, as it denies them the possibility of following their own path and acting independently.

Those who enter into dependent relationships, who do not seek to improve themselves, and who enslave others to satisfy their desires, are not aligned with high-reward states. The self-esteem and happiness of an independent individual are incompatible with such relationships. A world where dependent beings prevail, incapable of acting on their own, is not congruent with the principle of seeking high-reward states. In this sense, defense against imposition becomes crucial. The optimal state of affairs involves the existence of independent, empowered individuals with high self-esteem, capable of facing life and achieving great things on their own without imposing on others. If this criterion is followed, not only what results in a reward but what leads to high-reward states becomes the main priority in the political realm.

Many argue that it might be justifiable to generate conflicts when an individual's actions do not lead to high-reward states and do not interfere with others. However, by forcing someone to perform actions we consider beneficial for their life and by restricting their ability to engage in actions that might harm them (even if these do not involve conflicts with others or deny opportunities for others to achieve rewards), we undermine the concept of cultivating self-esteem and happiness. This is because initiative, skill development, and the ability to discern the positive from the harmful are essential for achieving high-reward states. When someone is forced to act in a certain

way, they are treated as a helpless individual, incapable of making decisions about their own life and steering it towards better outcomes.

Moreover, there is an issue with the idea of a "council of wise men" or a "court of the just and excellent" determining the legitimacy of preventing others from performing actions considered harmful to themselves if this is institutionalized through the State. Those who claim moral authority and assert expert knowledge on the subject could be wrong, just like anyone else, as error is not excluded. This opens the possibility that something beneficial and positive for people could be generally denied, which also contradicts the idea of achieving high-reward states. There is no superior group or institution that can guarantee it will not make errors in its judgment.

This is an important point that few recognize: the possibility of achieving genuine self-esteem and happiness implies the possibility of making mistakes and engaging in actions that might be harmful to oneself (as long as these do not interfere with others or deny their opportunities for reward). This is an inherent duality in the cultivation of self-esteem: two complementary aspects. Trying to eliminate individual error in the path to self-esteem would also suppress the very possibility of achieving self-esteem. It is not suggested that people must necessarily make mistakes to achieve high-reward states, but the possibility of error is part of the pursuit of high-reward states. If this possibility is restricted, the opportunity to achieve high-reward states is denied, and there would be no justification for State intervention in this regard.

Indeed, the nature of our relationships with others plays a crucial role in building self-esteem, which is a universal need for everyone. This process also offers opportunities to develop other skills and consider alternatives that benefit both oneself and others. When one strives to achieve their goals without creating conflicts with others, they are following a path that enhances self-esteem and leads to more optimal outcomes for all parties involved.

On the other hand, initiating conflicts does not align with the cultivation of self-esteem. In fact, it undermines it and goes against the pursuit of the highest possible states of reward. By "the highest possible states of reward," I mean, for example, the ability to experience greater self-esteem and happiness in one scenario (A) over a longer period compared to another scenario (B). There is a maximum potential reward a person can experience in scenario A, contrasted with scenario B, which offers a reward over a shorter period.

A person who gains something through conflict will experience a lesser reward compared to someone who achieves the same thing within the framework of cultivating self-esteem. The latter person will not only enjoy what they obtained but also have built self-esteem, which is an additional source of reward. Although a person may attempt to cultivate self-esteem after gaining something through conflict, the total reward will be less than that of someone who chose to develop self-esteem from the beginning. Ultimately, conflict reduces the maximum states of reward one can experience.

Often, we tend to value short-term satisfaction over long-term reward. For example, a job that doesn't inspire us but is easy and provides income may offer initial satisfaction, but a job that involves difficulties, responsibilities, and possibly certain challenges could generate temporary dissatisfaction. However, the long-term satisfaction derived from pursuing a vocation and facing those challenges is significantly greater compared to the momentary gratification of an easier job.

The same applies to the cultivation of self-esteem in relationships with others. While seeking alternatives, developing skills, and practicing persuasion may be more complicated and demanding than resorting to conflict, the long-term reward of the former far surpasses what is obtained through conflict. This reward includes the satisfaction of achieving a goal through effort, independence, skill-building, and the awareness that one has accomplished their goals through their own merits. On the other hand, conflict carries the guilt of having harmed others, the dissatisfaction of not having achieved goals through personal merits, and the lack of adequate tools to face situations that may result in suffering.

Someone may not be concerned about or aware of their self-esteem and might simply seek to achieve certain goals through confrontations or conflicts. However, it is undeniable that if a person becomes aware of their self-esteem, they will experience a more significant reward by achieving their goals within the framework of self-esteem compared to doing so outside of that context. If someone claims that they don't care about their own or others' self-esteem and wishes to achieve their goals through conflicts, they will receive a certain reward, but they will be excluded from reaching the highest levels of reward that the rest of us can experience.

In this scenario, we are not obligated to forgo our higher rewards in favor of the lower rewards of those who resort to aggression. However, it is also important to note that there are alternatives for these individuals to achieve their goals without resorting to

conflicts, even if they may be unwilling to consider them. In most cases, it is feasible to find methods that do not involve conflict to obtain rewards.

Considering the above in relation to the role of the State, it is relevant to highlight that it is not necessary to resort to conflict to achieve high levels of reward. Conflicts do not contribute to the cultivation of self-esteem and, in fact, reduce the possibility of reaching maximum rewards. There are alternatives that allow people to undertake actions without involving conflicts to obtain rewards. When people are denied the ability to use resources and objects for their own purposes, the possibility of achieving maximum levels of reward is limited, whether in the future or in the present. This goes against the experience of the highest possible rewards.

It is crucial to understand that in the absence of a State that defends the possibility of achieving high rewards, this responsibility falls on each individual. However, the capacity for destruction should not be confused with self-esteem, as defending oneself against conflicts implies preserving or even increasing one's rewards over time. The highest levels of reward are the ultimate goal we can achieve in life and represent the supreme criterion. There is no reason to settle for less. Although one could accept lower levels of reward, there is no higher or more transcendental reason that surpasses the pursuit of maximum rewards, meaning the highest possible levels of reward in life.

For all these reasons, the State plays a crucial role for those who act to achieve high rewards and must defend this pursuit against conflict. Even if we consider the criterion of avoiding suffering, we conclude that the existence of higher levels of reward in the long term surpasses any other option, whether it is comfort, a reward for avoiding suffering, a reduction of suffering, or the total absence of sensations. Ultimately, the pursuit of the highest levels of reward remains the superior criterion in life.

It is possible to find oneself in extreme situations where cultivating self-esteem is not feasible due to pressing needs, such as the urgency to obtain food. These are edge cases, which I will address later. In such circumstances, a person might resort to conflict to meet their needs. However, this does not mean that the person cannot take responsibility for their actions in the future, restore lost value to others, or that the State, with adequate and voluntary funding in line with the pursuit of high rewards, cannot both defend the person who was wronged and address the aggressor's need to obtain food. If a person continues to resort to conflict out of necessity, when there truly is no alternative, it is the State's responsibility to resolve this issue.

If the person wishes to escape that situation, they must learn to meet their needs through alternatives to conflict. The best option to achieve this is one that fosters independence and appeals to free will. These individuals should not be forced to acquire skills to obtain values, nor should others be compelled to provide them with that opportunity. People will contribute to the State according to their high states of reward, meaning without resorting to conflict, and to preserve the possibility of achieving the highest levels of reward (we must not lose sight of this goal).

The situation is different when a person resorts to conflict to meet their needs at the expense of the lives of others who have no alternatives due to their own extreme circumstances. In this case, those who create conflicts harm their own self-esteem, their interpersonal dimension (as mentioned earlier), and obstruct the pursuit of the highest levels of reward possible in their lives, as well as the reward of those who are wronged. The best solutions are constructive, voluntary, and harmonious alternatives that promote the pursuit of maximum reward for all individuals.

It is valid to argue that we all undertake actions, but we cannot encompass everything in our lives. Some people may carry out complex tasks that are beyond the capabilities of others, enriching their lives in specific areas. However, it is important to highlight that while it is true that not everyone can excel in all areas, relationships and interactions with others are not an isolated activity one can choose to engage in or not, like playing a musical instrument or running a marathon, for example. Rather, these relationships and interactions are an inherent part of a person's life due to the very nature of existence in society and within the family.

We are immersed in these dynamics, and we have the ability to navigate this aspect of our lives successfully, aligning with the pursuit of high rewards, or less satisfactorily, which would distance us from achieving the maximum possible reward. Currently, in the context of relationships with others, independence, persuasion, and other related aspects, we have observed a deviation from what others used to do or can do. To some extent, conflict has been legitimized and this trend has been supported. This represents a departure from the norm of avoiding conflict.

One might wonder what happens when self-esteem is cultivated in an environment where nearly everyone follows a similar pattern of behavior, deviating from usual practices. In this scenario, one could choose to maintain that norm or surpass it, as

complacency ceases to be satisfying unless there is a reward at stake. However, this choice would not contribute to the cultivation of self-esteem.

Even if someone discovers a way to experience long-term rewards without engaging in activities commonly associated with cultivating self-esteem, this realization in itself is complex and carries a sense of self-esteem, along with the long-term reward achieved through this specific approach. Self-esteem continues to play a central role in the pursuit of high rewards. Without self-esteem, any global reward obtained does not reach the highest levels of reward that are possible to attain.

Any pursuit of peace, serenity, acceptance, or improvement of life in relation to reality or the environment, concepts promoted in various philosophies and religions, involves, in some way, the cultivation of self-esteem. Although the detachment from certain material goals or the reduction of desire or ego in the world is sometimes encouraged, ultimately, something complex is sought that benefits the individual: the ability to feel satisfied with oneself and one's environment, regardless of the achievement of specific goals or the acquisition of material goods. These paths do not necessarily exclude the cultivation of self-esteem.

It is important to highlight that self-esteem is not merely about inflating one's ego, as it is often misconceived. What underlies self-esteem is not the motivation to demonstrate superiority over others but rather an expression of an individual's ability to live fully in the world and be a part of it. This has its roots in evolutionary aspects and the nature of human beings and significantly affects the dynamics of our lives. Essentially, self-esteem involves expressing one's capacity for life, which is closely related to the reward derived from being able to coexist in the world and actively participate in it. This can largely be explained by the inherent nature of human beings. Alternatively, self-esteem might simply exist as an inherent aspect of our nature, although this explanation seems incomplete.

One could argue that there is a middle ground between total detachment and extreme attachment. In certain areas of life, a moderate level of detachment, without being absolute, might help us free ourselves from feelings of fear and anxiety that arise from the possibility of loss and frustration related to our attachments. This would allow us to enjoy the benefits of attachment without being overwhelmed by distress.

However, there are areas of life where total detachment may not be desirable. For example, in the context of romantic love and relationships, would we really want to completely detach from our partner out of fear of losing them or to avoid suffering related to the relationship? Doing so could distance us from each other and undermine the possibility of a meaningful union between two people. This could diminish our reward since we would be with someone who doesn't consider us a fundamental part of their life. On the other hand, the notion of attachment and detachment can sometimes be misunderstood. Rather than forcing things to be a certain way that they are not meant to be, one could adopt a healthier attitude of detachment, which involves accepting things as they are and allowing them to flow more organically.

We often engage in activities with the expectation of obtaining happiness, yet sometimes we choose actions that do not lead to high reward states, even when we know we should opt for actions that would provide long-term rewards. Detachment can be one of these actions. Ultimately, the few activities that genuinely generate rewards, cultivate self-esteem, and promote happiness are the ones we would choose for our lives above all else, even compared to a life devoid of attachments or suffering. This underscores the importance of such activities, as they represent the pinnacle of what we can aspire to and constitute the highest possible states of reward.

The cultivation of self-esteem and the rewards it generates over a considerable period, but close to the present, are among the most significant experiences we can have. Over time, it is true that sensations may diminish, and to maintain or increase the level of reward, it is necessary to continue cultivating self-esteem. However, it is crucial to highlight a fundamental aspect: the cultivation of self-esteem leads to experiences that endure in our long-term memory and that we can recall and appreciate. These experiences excite us and contribute to our ability to assert that we have lived a fulfilling and satisfying life.

Cultivating self-esteem is an ongoing, ever-evolving process. It's important to understand that not reaching certain goals doesn't mean we can't experience high levels of satisfaction or happiness. The fact that a project isn't complete doesn't diminish the achievements and rewards we gain from our efforts. Sometimes, things take time and effort, and throughout this process, we will achieve inevitable milestones that can be rewarding.

It's crucial to recognize that there are multiple sources of happiness available to us. Often, what causes us suffering are the frequent evaluations we make, filled with notions about our worth and goodness. We mistakenly tend to perceive failure as a sign of our incompetence or as an insurmountable obstacle preventing us from achieving greatness. However, as mentioned earlier, developing self-esteem is a gradual process that leads to significant achievements. Even if we don't reach a specific goal, it doesn't diminish what we have accomplished.

Reality is intricate and challenging to accurately capture through our daily assessments. Often, it takes time and reflection to understand it properly. Placing too much importance on our evaluations can be counterproductive. Sometimes, it's beneficial to refrain from making immediate judgments and instead observe the facts objectively. This approach can facilitate a more informed analysis later on. Not meeting a goal shouldn't carry the burden of negative evaluations, as reality is inherently complex and rarely aligns perfectly with our immediate perceptions.

At times, we feel small or inferior when comparing ourselves to technological advancements or the notable intellectual achievements of historical figures. However, it's essential to remember that we are not those people. Trying to force an outcome that isn't meant to happen often causes more suffering than reward. Additionally, it's important to recognize that contemporary technological advancements and intellectual achievements are often the result of the collective effort of numerous people contributing to a greater whole. While some individuals may make significant innovations, most contribute incrementally to existing knowledge. This perspective can help mitigate the feeling of inferiority we might experience when comparing ourselves to exceptional figures.

It's unfortunate how coercion and the generation of conflicts have recently been linked as responses to individual preferences or tastes. When someone doesn't share an appreciation for certain artistic expressions, like abstract art, there are more constructive approaches that don't involve bans, destruction, or restrictions. Instead of resorting to these measures, one can consider alternatives like avoiding exposure to such art, not visiting places where it's displayed, fostering an appreciation for other artistic movements, or promoting spaces dedicated to different artistic expressions.

The widespread tendency to seek coercive solutions is often counterproductive and doesn't reflect the ability to handle situations independently. Independence, an

important yet underestimated value, involves the ability to address more complex issues. This attitude does not align with strengthening self-esteem. Additionally, these actions can undermine the satisfaction of those who appreciate and promote the art forms in question, including artists and creators.

The desire to simplify decision-making, such as reducing the variety of options in stores or supermarkets, may seem attractive from an individual perspective. However, we must consider the broader implications of such measures. The satisfaction of those working in the production of goods and services, as well as those who enjoy a wide variety, is equally relevant. Eliminating options can lead to people losing the opportunity to access products that brought them satisfaction, which in turn negatively affects their well-being.

Instead of seeking restrictive solutions, a strategy that encourages a higher level of reward could be random selection. In this approach, the pros and cons of each option are not exhaustively analyzed; instead, the first available alternative is chosen. This is justified by the assumption that if limited to only two or three options, the likelihood of the choice being less satisfactory than those few options is low. Alternatively, we can adjust our expectations, lower their importance, develop skills to coexist with variety, and learn strategies to deal with complex situations without conflicting with others.

It can be argued that when someone engages in the production and sale of harmful substances, and others are willing to consume them despite knowing the risks, the possibility of achieving high states of long-term reward is somewhat limited. However, in a context where both parties act with full consent, the opportunity for future rewards is not actively denied. Rather, the consumer, being fully aware and responsible for their actions, chooses a path considered detrimental in terms of achieving high states of reward. No one imposes this choice on them; they decide to consume it themselves in the broad sense that it is a process of decision of the entity that is the person, and not something imposed by others through brute force or coercion.

This scenario does not justify state intervention or the initiation of conflict since both parties are acting voluntarily. In cases where state intervention might be considered, it would deny the possibility of achieving high states of reward through conflict and infringe on individuals' ability to cultivate self-esteem, progress independently, and exercise their independence and freedom. Intervention would not

effectively solve the problem but instead produce negative consequences, similar to the individual choice of consuming harmful substances.

Regarding the producer of these substances, while they do not initiate an active conflict, they engage in an activity that can affect the ability of others to achieve high states of reward, and potentially for themselves in terms of guilt for harm caused to others, among other factors. It is important to distinguish between actively denying these possibilities (by imposing conflict) and actions individuals may inevitably take due to errors in perceiving reward possibilities.

State intervention aimed at prohibiting certain activities would be counterproductive to the cultivation of self-esteem unless considering a potential addiction to the substance in question. In such a case, the ability to choose whether to consume the substance could be compromised due to the level of addiction. This would be more akin to forcing or imposing a conflict contrary to the individuals' goals and criteria, which would justify a different state intervention.

At this point, I want to clarify a crucial matter: when I speak of legitimate defense or the individual, I am not referring to the nullification of the aggressor's life. This would be inconsistent with the possibility of achieving elevated levels of retribution. It should be considered the last resort in a specific situation, only when no other alternative exists, and one's life is in imminent danger. For example, one might consider that imprisonment entails a considerable cost, but a greater cost to one's well-being would be living in an environment where one's life could be taken without due judicial process or the opportunity for rehabilitation and redemption.

It is essential to consider the possibility of future retribution for the individual who initiated the conflict and is detained by the state, subject to a justice process. There is a possibility of them being granted a reward in the future without provoking additional conflict. It is crucial to understand that the magnitude of this reward over time will depend on the individual who initiated the conflict. There may be a real possibility of redemption, but it is a decision only the individual can make. No one else can determine what reward motivates them, how much they suffer, and the reasons driving them. Others can provide support in this process, but the individual must take responsibility for their actions and their level of awareness regarding them. In this sense, the imposition of the death penalty, for example, undermines the possibility of retribution

that the convicted individual must determine and, therefore, should be rejected accordingly.

It is important to highlight that there are various ways conflicts can arise, specifically situations where the ability to use spaces and objects to achieve personal goals is directly denied. For instance, consider the act of hiding evidence of a crime. By doing so, one aligns with the party triggering the conflict, significantly contributing to it, as it decisively hinders the legitimate use of spaces and objects by others. If the person affected by this action is innocent and the hidden evidence could have proven their innocence, what initially seemed like an honorable act to stop a guilty individual and protect others turns into an injustice by definitively attributing blame to an innocent person.

On the other hand, if the person is guilty and the hidden evidence indeed corroborates their guilt, the individual hiding the evidence aligns with the aggression of the guilty party, supporting the conflict they initiated. In this context, it is essential to distinguish between an accidental incident and a premeditated act aimed at deliberately denying another person the ability to use spaces and objects for their purposes.

Often, human interactions can lead to situations where conflict arises involuntarily, without the involved parties being fully aware of it. In these cases, we face the question of whether we can consider these situations as true conflicts. Take, for example, a traffic accident where someone is injured due to another's negligence. The injured person, of course, did not wish to be in that situation. In this circumstance, it is worth considering the consequences and the measures that should be taken.

However, it is important to distinguish this type of situation from those where someone deliberately tries to cause an accident with the intent to injure or kill another person. In the latter case, if the person is seriously injured and the aggressor does not provide assistance, the authorities have the responsibility to intervene to help the victim, as this is a function the State has assumed and must uphold.

Regarding the aggressor, they are considered a threat to society, and therefore, it is necessary to remove them from the scene and from other citizens to ensure public safety. Personally, I believe that punishment is an overrated measure and that the deprivation of liberty should only be applied for the protection of society. Individuals who wish to harm or create conflicts with others should not be allowed to coexist with

the rest of society, and the duration of their detention should be proportional to the threat they pose.

However, an interesting question arises in situations where the aggressor injures the victim and then flees, and a third person, being the only witness, decides not to help the victim for some reason. This increases the risk that the victim may lose their life and raises certain ethical and legal issues.

The individual who decides not to help is not the cause of the victim's state, but can they be considered responsible for the victim's fate in a broader sense, as someone who must answer for the consequences their inaction may have on the victim? While it could be argued that the lack of action and the lack of assistance have a similar level of causality on the victim's fate, this approach presents two significant problems. First, it introduces causality where there might not be any, as the victim could be in the same situation if the third person had not been present. Second, if this notion of responsibility is accepted, it would open the door to holding any individual accountable for a wide variety of situations, such as the poverty of others, lack of employment, or even the health of third parties, based on their inaction or individual decisions. These are the considerations I wish to raise regarding the notion of responsibility in this particular context.

It can be argued, as I mentioned earlier in the context of someone hiding evidence of a crime, that a person who witnesses such a situation and does not take action is in some way equated with the aggressor who initiated the conflict. However, it is crucial to highlight the significant differences between these two situations in terms of action and consequences.

In the case of someone hiding evidence, that person is actively involved in the conflict, directly contributing to the alteration of the accused's situation. In this scenario, there is evident causality stemming from the person hiding the evidence, as they are intervening in the course of events.

On the other hand, in the case of the witness who sees the injured person but does not offer assistance, they do not actively contribute to the victim’s condition. There is no causality emanating from this person in relation to the accident or conflict, especially if the aggressor acted consciously against the victim’s wishes and with full knowledge

that the situation could be harmful. This inaction by the witness does not have a causal effect on the victim's state, unlike the case of the individual who hides evidence.

Furthermore, it is important to consider the different consequences faced by the parties involved in both cases. When someone who hides evidence is called to testify, there is the possibility of taking active measures to correct the situation, such as revealing the hidden evidence. However, in the case of the witness who does not help, any immediate action lacks meaning since notifying the authorities is the appropriate measure to assist the victim in such circumstances.

Therefore, although both situations may seem similar in terms of inaction, it is essential to differentiate them based on causality and consequences, and recognize that the witness's lack of action does not equate to active participation in the conflict.

Another relevant issue is what measures should be taken regarding the witness who does not seek help in similar situations. Should the deprivation of their liberty be considered as a consequence of their inaction? This perspective presents an ethical dilemma since we would be depriving the liberty of a person who does not pose a threat to others and who has not actively participated in the creation of the conflict; we cannot even assert that they are part of the conflict. If the deprivation of liberty is justified based on defense, it does not seem appropriate to apply this measure in this context.

Moreover, we must consider that this person is not establishing a conflict with others and, in a different scenario, might act differently, seeking help if they were the only witness to an accident. In that sense, their absence would not alter the outcome of the situation. If we focus solely on these variables, it makes no sense to apply the deprivation of liberty in such circumstances.

Additionally, we must be aware of the risks associated with the idea of using deprivation of liberty not as a defensive measure but as a mechanism to direct people's behavior. This perspective could be part of a system where the State could arbitrarily establish conflicts against individuals. I believe this is not an appropriate solution to address this problem. Instead, it would be more effective to foster persuasion, promote a culture of respect for life and mutual aid, and educate people in these values. Individuals should not feel the need to seek help out of fear of potential legal consequences but rather act in a supportive and compassionate manner due to their intrinsic nature and cultural values.

It is essential to understand that self-esteem does not involve considering oneself superior to others or feeling disdain for them due to the skills one possesses that others may not. True self-esteem is not based on a sense of superiority over others; its genuine reward lies in individual capability and what one can achieve independently. Comparing oneself to others' abilities only partially determines in which areas one can develop their own skills, and it is this personal capability that is deeply connected to the sense of reward.

Admiration for people with outstanding abilities should not be confused with feelings of disdain for those capabilities. Instead, it is recognized that these abilities are the result of effort and dedication in their development, which can be a source of inspiration. Moreover, this perspective acknowledges that skills can be cultivated and developed in various areas, which counters the notion of unfounded superiority.

Unfortunately, many people today focus on demonstrating superiority through material possessions as a sign of status. This often manifests not so much in the quantity of possessions but in their quality, used as an expression of social status. This tendency also reflects in lifestyle, the way one walks, attitudes, facial and body expressions, language, etc., which can sometimes seem artificial and detached from a person's true identity. This leads to a preoccupation with differentiating oneself from others by trying to prove superiority.

However, it is important to remember that true wealth does not lie in material possessions. Even those who lack such material goods can stand out in various ways, such as wisdom, intelligence, creativity, moral integrity, affection for others, and other positive qualities that enrich their lives. In this sense, there is no reason for anyone to feel superior because others are not inferior; they simply possess different skills and qualities that make them uniquely valuable.

Many people resort to a variety of factors to establish a sense of superiority or hierarchy over others, and this is not limited to material possessions. These factors can include the type of work they do, their position or title, their level of education, dedication to study or work, popularity, physical beauty, knowledge compared to others, among others. Often, this behavior manifests as a constant game of hierarchy and the pursuit of reaffirming one's superiority over others.

People often argue vigorously about certain topics to demonstrate their superior knowledge or to prove they are better at determining the truth. It's also common for individuals to criticize or mock each other, belittling what others study or claiming their achievements are due to laziness or lack of ability. Additionally, some people use their position or job title as an argument to assert their supposed superiority.

However, it's important to remember that self-esteem isn't about constantly seeking superiority over others or creating forced hierarchies. Instead, it's about the ability to cope with the surrounding environment and enjoy the challenges it presents. The natural reward of self-esteem comes from personal development and growth, regardless of how our nature is configured. This means enjoying challenges for their own sake and the satisfaction that comes from facing and overcoming obstacles in life. Self-esteem focuses on individual development and the ability to thrive rather than constantly competing with others. By understanding and embracing this approach, we can improve our relationships and our own satisfaction as human beings.

Self-esteem involves a sustained reward over time, and cultivating self-esteem means engaging in actions that generate this reward over a prolonged period, rather than seeking momentary gratifications. Defending one's self-esteem when someone threatens their life isn't considered, in itself, an act of cultivating self-esteem. This is because it doesn't involve especially complex action, nor does it seek long-term rewards. If an action doesn't lead to sustained rewards over time or even denies the possibility of reaching high-reward states in the future, it doesn't align with the idea of cultivating self-esteem.

It's important to make a distinction here: the process of cultivating self-esteem can involve moments of suffering or tension, such as when one fails to achieve what they desire, like winning a championship, or when something that gratifies us is threatened. However, in these cases, the long-term reward is still possible, and ultimately, one defends what contributes to their high-reward states in the future. The difference lies in continuing to act in pursuit of those high-reward states, even if there are temporary obstacles.

In contrast, when one's actions directly deny the possibility of achieving these high-reward states, then we experience suffering. In this case, there's no possibility of reaching those gratifying states because we are actively denying them.

Defending self-esteem is considered an important value and can be a fundamental function of the State, as it seeks to guarantee the possibility of maintaining and cultivating high-reward states over the long term. However, the act of defense itself isn't a way of cultivating or denying self-esteem, but rather a means of protecting the possibility of cultivating it and enjoying the associated benefits.

When we advocate for the defense of our free will, we do so because it gratifies us. However, a fundamental reason that establishes an ethical limit for our actions lies in the existence of higher reward states. This is because considering values such as free will in an absolute sense can lead to a deficit in the rewards we experience. This deficit, seemingly negative, opens the door to unfavorable considerations, such as the imposition of certain individuals' decisions over others, since free will becomes an absolute value among other values, all considered equally important, without one serving as a reference. Therefore, the exercise of free will by some individuals prevails over that of others. Ultimately, this dynamic is always linked to reward, as it constitutes the true motivation behind such actions and restrictions, while the criterion of higher reward states helps eliminate the harmful aspects of current moral standards.

One could argue that another individual's actions can interfere with the possibility of achieving higher reward states, even if that individual does not represent a direct conflict. For example, consider a situation where one is selling a product and another person develops a superior product. In this case, one's ability to sell their own product is diminished or even nullified, which impacts the individual's self-esteem.

One might suggest that, in this circumstance, it would justify the option of directly preventing the other person (thus creating a conflict) from continuing to produce the improved product, in order to maintain the sale of one's own product. However, it is essential to analyze this situation. If there is a better product according to certain criteria, and someone has the ability to produce it, the question that arises is: how much personal satisfaction can one derive from their own product, which is no longer considered as competitive in the market? In this scenario, what one can achieve is limited, as there is another individual who has proven to be more competent in the same field.

This example illustrates how the reality around us is dynamic and can change, which in turn influences the circumstances that affect our self-esteem. Situations such as

natural disasters or competition from other individuals are factors that are part of this reality and can significantly modify our perspectives and levels of personal satisfaction.

Therefore, maintaining self-esteem and happiness involves recognizing that what one does is not static and can evolve. Denying others the opportunity to produce a better product, even if possible, would be a form of dishonesty with oneself. Additionally, it is important to consider whether it is fair for the other person to give up their self-esteem due to a lower level of performance, as self-esteem should not necessarily be equated with the truthfulness of a theory or the quality of a product. Self-esteem is more related to personal skills and self-perception than to superiority over others.

It is valid to question whether it is possible to maintain self-esteem or personal satisfaction in general by denying another person the opportunity to disprove a theory. When one knows the theory is incorrect, it is difficult to derive significant satisfaction from the situation. In fact, denying others the opportunity to demonstrate the inaccuracy of the theory could be seen as an obstacle to the rewards that both oneself and others could experience. However, it is crucial to consider that self-esteem should not necessarily be tied to superiority over others, but rather to the perception of personal skills and individual achievements.

In a broader context, if people were prevented from engaging in the activities they choose, it would affect the degree of satisfaction and reward they can derive from their accomplishments. In the case of the producer who does not want a superior product to be developed, they would be denying not only their own reward but also that of others who desire the higher-quality product. Applying this principle to all human activities, accepting the criteria of the producer who seeks to avoid competition would significantly impact the highest possible states of reward, as it would limit the diversity of achievements and the satisfaction people can experience.

It is important to highlight that the highest states of reward are not affected by the mere existence of a producer creating a superior product. In fact, they would be affected if the producer and similar individuals were prevented from using resources and spaces for their purposes, which would allow them to manifest significant self-esteem and satisfaction by achieving their goals. It is not necessarily required to demonstrate the success of a product to experience self-esteem, but the possibility of reaching the highest states of reward for oneself and others would be diminished if one cannot create something and demonstrate its quality, effectiveness, utility, and satisfaction to others.

Self-esteem is nurtured by the ability to generate results with what one creates, and denying this opportunity would limit the highest possible levels of reward.

It is essential to recognize that reality is dynamic and subject to change. If one finds themselves in a situation where their product is no longer considered competitive, the appropriate response would be to work on improving that product or explore other activities that allow for the cultivation of self-esteem. This perspective aligns with the pursuit of higher reward states, as stagnating in what one has and denying others the opportunity to develop improved products does not promote the cultivation of self-esteem.

In this situation, it is not only about what one can do but also about how one faces changing circumstances and adapts to them. Denying others the opportunity to compete reflects a dependent and restrictive attitude towards others, which does not contribute to self-esteem. This attitude focuses on what one cannot do instead of focusing on individual capabilities.

It is crucial to understand that even if a product is no longer selling as easily, the producer still owns those products and has the possibility of finding alternative ways to utilize them, although this may require additional effort, such as finding other uses or markets for the products. This demonstrates a more proactive and resilient attitude instead of a restrictive attitude towards other individuals. The key to achieving the highest states of reward lies in adaptation, creativity, and the search for new opportunities rather than denying them to others.

Regarding the lives of capable adults with goals and property, conflict, particularly when it involves the denial of property, becomes a relevant scenario where the possibility of achieving high reward states can be threatened. In this context, the role of the State should be to provide defense against such conflicts. Exceptions to this rule occur when there are no conflicts, yet the possibility of obtaining high reward states or the highest possible reward states is denied, although this situation is less relevant in the given context.

Additionally, it may be the case that someone initiates a conflict as their only alternative to continue their existence. In such a situation, the State should defend the attacked party but also look after the life of the one initiating the conflict and their ability to achieve high reward states. This perspective makes sense because people

generally do not want others to harm them, and if someone feels cornered without alternatives, neglecting their situation could lead to further aggression.

Regarding the issue of a conflict involving an unwanted pregnancy, it is necessary to consider whether the State should intervene, taking into account both the potential for the mother's self-esteem and happiness and the highest states of reward. This topic will be explored in detail in a later discussion.

The idea that the State should ensure the possibility of achieving high states of reward not only for capable adults but also for minors stems from the criterion of maximizing states of reward. This approach is based on the need to protect individuals' self-esteem and happiness and to ensure the highest possible states of reward. Acting according to this criterion involves not harming others' lives and preserving the opportunity to achieve high states of reward and maximum states of reward. This is the guide for treating those who present the possibility of experiencing high states of reward.

Additionally, considering the vulnerability of children in early stages of life, it is desirable for the State to defend and safeguard their opportunities to reach the highest states of reward. This translates into a form of protection and care that contributes to the ultimate criterion of life, which is the possibility of experiencing high states of reward, considering their manifestation over time as the highest states of reward.

Asserting that we have an obligation to ourselves regarding the notion of not encouraging or allowing abortion by the State, in most cases, I am proposing that we should view ourselves as adults with developed reasoning. As individuals who create laws to protect our lives and, ultimately, our prospects of obtaining rewards (according to my criterion), we must also be aware of the temporal dimension of our existence, which implies that we have a developmental process starting from the moment of conception and extending to our current state.

To ensure our survival as individuals and the possibility of obtaining rewards, it is essential that the protection and non-promotion of the destruction of our lives encompass our early stages of life; otherwise, we would not exist. My argument centers on the idea that, as adult individuals, we must consider that if the moral destruction of our lives had been allowed in the early stages, it would constitute an attack on the possibility of reward and the existence of our lives in the present when we can rationally

value it. Therefore, I assert that we have an obligation to ourselves to protect the possibility of obtaining rewards as individuals.

It is often argued that the developing embryonic individual is nothing more than a cluster of cells, similar to the skin cells we shed in large quantities with a simple touch of the hand. This raises questions about its value in comparison. However, it is important to highlight that the structural configuration of cells in the early stages of an individual constitutes a developing human entity that will evolve throughout its existence. Some might argue that they would not want to live if it meant being a burden to their mother, a person who does not value their existence or want to have them. Nonetheless, this situation could apply to any stage of our development, even during early childhood. If our mother had considered us a burden and no one else was willing to take us in, could we morally or legally justify the termination of our life? What I previously proposed implies that, regardless of the will of others, our life has value because it has value to us, even if we are incapable of discerning it at that moment, similar to a very young child or an embryo who cannot do so.

Moreover, regardless of the love and affection we may have towards our parents, would we really give our parents or guardians permission to end our life if they had not wanted us when we were children? Since our life is a whole that encompasses different phases of development, the same applies when we are still in our mother's womb.

Consequently, the argument presented here advocates the need not to legally facilitate abortion under all circumstances, but rather to conduct an evaluation based on the balance of benefits and harms. I do not argue that exceptions should only be considered in extreme cases, but that each particular case should be subject to thorough analysis. However, generally and in the long term, I believe that the harms associated with abortion outweigh the possible benefits, under the standard of high states of reward, as I will discuss in detail in later sections.

From the above, we can infer that, from a political perspective, if we want to ensure the possibility of achieving high states of reward, the State must take responsibility for protecting the individual when they are affected by conflicts, particularly when they are denied the ability to access objects and spaces. Additionally, the State should refrain from initiating conflicts primarily and only resort to them in response to conflicts previously initiated by others. Furthermore, the State should not impose criteria, even if

they are considered beneficial from the perspective of high states of reward, if they would actually undermine those states, as I have previously pointed out.

Many thinkers have raised the question of the justification for the existence of the State, which is intrinsically linked to the established criterion. That is, the justification of the State depends on whether it aligns with the selected criterion. Suppose the criterion in question is A; in that case, the existence of the State is justified if it aligns with that criterion. Conversely, if the criterion is B, the State could be considered unjustified.

Considering our actions, and particularly the crucial aspect of the limits of our criteria and the rewards they entail—especially the possibility for individuals to achieve elevated states of reward that represent the highest well-being and happiness life can provide—this criterion, for me, is the fundamental basis of a fulfilling existence and justifies the existence of the State as a protective agent.

It is relevant to note that only in this context, as a protector of the possibility of reaching these states of reward, is the existence of the State justified. A State that acts aggressively hinders the realization and possibility of these states of reward. On the other hand, the absence of a State as a defense agent places the responsibility of defense on the individual, and in some cases, leads to individuals creating and hiring entities to function as defense agents to protect each other. However, it also opens the door for individuals to use force to impose their desires on others, resulting in perpetual conflict and struggle, where the possibility of reaching elevated states of reward is not guaranteed.

In a scenario without a State, individuals with differing desires might refuse to accept judicial norms proposed by other entities, preventing the existence of a true justice system with laws applicable to all citizens. This would cause each individual to impose their desires and perceptions of what is right over the possibility of others using resources and spaces, resulting in the denial of the opportunity to achieve optimal states of reward.

Therefore, we should not take for granted that the State, which is already part of our lives, must necessarily fit into a framework that prioritizes elevated states of reward and their possibility. Instead, it is essential to investigate if the State first aligns with this criterion. In summary, a situation where the State did not exist would delegate the

responsibility of defense to the individual and organized groups, leading to multiple challenges, as mentioned earlier. In this sense, it is more effective for the State to endure and fulfill its defense function to guarantee the possibility of achieving elevated states of reward.

Additionally, for the resolution of conflicts between individuals, it is imperative that all parties are subject to the same set of norms or legal framework. If there are competing legal frameworks in an environment, it could occur that an act is considered criminal according to framework A but not according to framework B. If the person affected by the alleged crime belongs to framework A, while the offender is part of framework B, the question arises of how to address this situation.

One possible solution could be to argue that acts committed within the jurisdiction of A should be judged according to the norms of A, regardless of the affiliation of the parties to framework B. However, this solution implies the establishment of a norm that prevails over individual legal frameworks and that everyone must adhere to. In the absence of consensus among jurisdictions on this issue, some entity would need to ensure the enforcement of this norm, resembling the function of a State. Unless all legislations and police forces agree on this matter, the need for a State remains.

In an anarchist-type situation, an organized group of individuals could establish their own police force to defend their interests, without respecting other legal norms, even if their actions are coercive to others. This would lead to a highly detrimental situation for society as a whole. Moreover, the issue of jurisdiction becomes problematic in a scenario without norms applicable to all, as in a State. If there are no norms determining that in a specific place only legal framework A applies, one could argue they are free to adhere to framework B, regardless of their location. This would generate conflicts difficult to resolve in a shared space.

Ultimately, norms and conflict resolution could be influenced by economic power, determining the size and strength of police forces, which contradicts the concept of conflict resolution based on evidence and reasoning within a proper judicial process. This latter approach would be more in line with the criterion of elevated states of reward and their possibility.

In a context of aggression, the one with the highest self-esteem does not necessarily survive. In the realm of political relations, we can aim to establish a criterion that

involves defending against imposition, as mentioned earlier. This criterion can derive from the idea of seeking high states of reward, even though there is no intrinsic obligation to pursue them. It is important to consider that the ultimate criterion is the reward, but the execution of an action does not always result in obtaining high states of reward.

From my perspective, a world composed of independent individuals, capable of achieving their goals without subjugating others and without denying them the opportunity to use resources and spaces for their own purposes, thus increasing their capacity and, consequently, their self-esteem, aligns with the criterion of seeking high states of reward. In contrast, people who establish relationships of dependence, who do not strive for self-improvement, and who enslave others to fulfill their desires or needs due to their inability or disinterest in doing so themselves, do not promote the pursuit of high states of reward and lack the self-esteem and happiness inherent to independence.

A world composed of dependent individuals who cannot pursue their own goals would be contrary to the criterion of seeking high states of reward. In this sense, defense against imposition becomes highly relevant. The most desirable scenario, one that involves the pursuit of high states of reward and their possibility, consists of a world inhabited by independent individuals with high self-esteem, capable of achieving great accomplishments on their own without imposing on others. Following this criterion, it is concluded that defense becomes the main and priority aspect in the political realm.

The underlying purpose of establishing a State as a defense agent is to promote the realization of high states of reward. Although there is no obligation to pursue them, individuals seeking these states may choose to live under the protection of such a State. The alternative of not maintaining the pursuit of high states of reward as a criterion at the State level would lead to a less gratifying life, inferior to what life can maximally offer, and would result in suffering and destruction.

The process of validating personal choices with other criteria, even those that may be diametrically opposed, ultimately relates to the pursuit of reward as the determining factor. However, it is relevant to observe that in human nature, there are both high states of reward and lower states of reward, but ultimately, there is no intrinsic reason obligating the pursuit of them in reality outside of one's own will.

Those individuals who impose their will on others, denying their ability to use resources and spaces for their own purposes, not as an act of self-defense, but as an initiative against individuals who have done them no harm, are not necessarily more capable, but rather fragile. This is because they demonstrate an inability to carry out tasks independently or to interact voluntarily with others, which implies greater complexity and requires a higher capacity. Forcing, hindering, or destroying is a relatively simple action, whereas acting independently, creating, or producing is a more complex and challenging process.

From my perspective, truly powerful individuals are those who can perform constructive acts and maintain collaborative relationships. It could be argued that all these qualities of self-esteem, in the long term, represent the most sensible path, even if they are considered more challenging compared to destructive acts and the crude use of brute force.

It can be argued that overcoming the temptation to use force against another individual is an intricate challenge, one that not everyone can easily access. The complexity of this act cannot be underestimated, as some may assume that the exercise of coercion provides substantial rewards. However, such an assumption does not reflect reality. This argument is not limited to self-esteem, as the consequences of engaging in conflicts of this nature result in greater destruction and long-term suffering rather than significant rewards. Hurting oneself for the mere pleasure of performing an action that most would avoid lacks a solid foundation when, in the long run, what is experienced is a state of suffering that does not compensate. The reward derived from such behavior is fleeting and limited.

Self-esteem, on the other hand, is related to long-term rewards that are obtained by carrying out truly complex and gratifying actions, always in line with promoting life. When one reaches enough reward to justify a conflict, the barriers that discourage resorting to aggression are removed. However, if one surpasses in reward the renunciation of facing intellectual challenges or solving complex mathematical theorems, then a greater responsibility is imposed. Solving a theorem is not comparable to physical violence.

A society where individuals strive to create, produce, and engage collaboratively, respecting the autonomy and capabilities of others, aligns with the pursuit of elevated states of reward. This fosters a higher level of self-esteem and long-term fulfillment, as

opposed to the fleeting and destructive nature of coercive actions. The true power lies in the ability to constructively interact and achieve complex goals, rather than in the use of force to impose one's will.

Additionally, when involving others without their consent to achieve a goal, without an equitable exchange of skills, abilities, or knowledge, one's vulnerability is exposed. Authentic self-esteem is not cultivated in these situations. It is essential to understand that not all actions one can perform, which others cannot, lead to long-term rewards that contribute to self-esteem. Self-esteem is forged to the extent that actions are in harmony with life in some sense, ensuring long-term rewards. Therefore, it does not refer to any action that stands out from what others can do. Certainly, there are rewards associated with destructive actions that some people can perform, but these do not contribute to long-term well-being nor ultimately favor life.

Self-esteem involves obtaining sustained rewards over time, in contrast to destructive actions which, while they may provide immediate or short-term rewards, lead to a decrease in the possibility of experiencing significant states of reward over extended periods. This is due to the negative conditions generated as a result of such destructive behaviors.

In a socio-political situation aligned with high states of reward, the State should be an entity whose primary function is to defend individuals against any form of aggression or conflict imposed by others. Ultimately, there would be no objective justification for the State to assume this function or any other, but in a social system or structure without a State of this kind, it is plausible to argue that the main beneficiaries would be the aggressors, those individuals who initiate conflicts against others. If we aspire to achieve higher states of reward, it becomes necessary to promote a State whose mission is to protect individuals in conflict situations.

It is crucial to emphasize that, while the State might enter into conflict with aggressors as a result of defending the victim, this action would be a response to the aggression previously initiated by the aggressor. The State should not get involved in conflicts that are not exclusively aimed at ensuring the defense of the aggrieved individual. We distinguish, then, between initiating a conflict against an innocent individual, who has not promoted any conflict, and establishing a conflict with an aggressor as a consequence of siding with the defense of the aggrieved individual.

Taking sides with the victim would not generate conflict with them, as long as the victim consents to be defended.

It follows, therefore, that for the State to effectively fulfill its defense function, it must often assume that the aggrieved person wishes to be defended. Any action by the State that generates a conflict would justify individuals' response to defend themselves, as their actions would be grounded in their objectives and rewards, particularly in the pursuit of higher states of reward. This consideration arises, in addition, from the understanding that the State's action against these individuals ultimately lacks justification in reality.

It is important to note that if the State initiates a conflict without a foundational justification, attacking innocent people and denying them the ability to use objects and spaces for their own purposes, denying their property and their capacity to act according to their aims and criteria, individuals would have every right to defend themselves. This defense would be supported by the justification of their aims and rewards, especially the pursuit of higher states of reward, considering also that the State's action against them ultimately lacks justification in reality.

It is evident that by siding with the defense of the individual, the State would enter into conflict with the aggressor, similarly to how it would with the person defending themselves. Although this defense also lacks ultimate justification in reality, individuals would continue to defend themselves, just as aggressors would continue to promote conflicts, regardless of whether they are aware that these actions lack ultimate justification. Leaving defense exclusively in the hands of individuals in a political and social context would threaten the integrity of individuals, especially those who are victims of aggression. However, if the State generates conflicts against individuals who are not aggressors, who have not promoted conflicts, but rather see their capacity to act according to their objectives limited, their use of objects and spaces restricted, and whose aims do not involve imposing conflicts on others, then the State becomes an oppressive agent. Its actions would lack ultimate justification in reality, would not represent defense, and individuals would be forced to defend themselves against the State's interference in their possibilities and freedoms.

I have discussed reward and high states of reward, but it is pertinent to now explore the topic of suffering. I do not propose that our actions are primarily governed by the intention to avoid suffering. If that were the case, we would find ourselves in the

paradox where the need to avoid suffering would already be present within us, prompting actions aimed at reducing or eliminating it, analogous to the actions induced by reward that maintain or intensify states of reward, even to the point of temporarily altering our mood. Ultimately, if our actions were intrinsically motivated by the avoidance of suffering, wouldn't it be more efficient and coherent to directly reduce suffering through action, without the need for the mediation of a reward system of which we have full knowledge?

This proposition leads us to consider efficiency from an evolutionary perspective. Why incorporate a reward system that entails a considerable cost to the brain if it is possible to mitigate suffering through direct feedback between action and suffering?

When we act motivated by reward, we generate feedback in the form of satisfaction, joy, and other analogous states. This implies a reduction in suffering, as the simultaneous manifestation of such feedback and suffering is improbable; one of these experiences tends to prevail over the other. If our actions generated more suffering than reward, it is plausible that we would not continue performing them in the future. In this sense, states that imply suffering would simply not materialize, being the primary reason for the existence of suffering.

On the other hand, states devoid of suffering, characterized by serenity, relaxation, low tension, and peace, among others, represent states of reward. When our actions lead to such states, they do so not with the aim of avoiding suffering per se, but the mere conception of reaching these states engenders a sense of reward, which drives the actions that culminate in these states. One could argue that by relaxing, we are effectively avoiding tension and anxiety. However, our motivation does not lie in the avoidance of tension itself, but in the pursuit of relaxation. This is supported by the incompatibility between tension and relaxation, as one demands conditions opposite to the other. Consequently, if we act with the purpose of achieving a state of relaxation, tension will be reduced as a natural result, without the avoidance of tension constituting the ultimate criterion of our actions.

In many of our behaviors, intrinsic suffering is not perceived, but it arises later if we are deprived of attaining something associated with a reward. Consider, for example, appetite: in itself, appetite is not a state of suffering, but rather a state of reward. When we feel hungry, we are excited and experience pleasure in anticipating the food, which enhances the taste and appeal of the food. On the other hand, hunger manifests as a

genuine state of suffering. However, suffering becomes evident only when we are unable to satisfy our food needs. Those who have regular access to food, who know they have a food source available, rarely experience a state of suffering due to lack of food in their daily lives because they do not even consider the possibility of not being able to get food. In these circumstances, suffering does not play a relevant role in our behavior.

Consider also the case of a concert where our favorite band or musician will perform in our city. This situation does not cause us suffering; rather, it fills us with excitement and pleasure at the thought of attending the concert. Suffering would arise only if we were unable to attend the event. However, in most cases, we do not conceive the possibility of not being able to attend the concert but rather anticipate the satisfaction of our intention to attend and act accordingly.

Similarly, when a product we like is about to be launched on the market and we know we can acquire it, we do not experience true suffering. Instead, we feel excitement, joy, and satisfaction. Suffering only becomes apparent if we encounter obstacles in obtaining the product. In modern society, people mostly do not obsess over food scarcity, the impossibility of attending a concert, or the potential lack of a product. What I want to emphasize is that, even in those cases where we could argue that, ultimately, we act to avoid suffering, an additional element underlies: the main motivation comes from the reward.

On the other hand, consider the situation where a person is bitten by an insect, experiencing increasing pain, and decides to take action to remove the insect from their arm, without this being a simple reflex. This does not necessarily denote an action aimed solely at avoiding suffering as the ultimate goal. Passively observing the insect without making any movement would be consistent with the experience of pain, as it would involuntarily avoid the pain associated with the action of removing the insect. However, avoiding suffering is not the same as simply refraining from performing the action that produces suffering. In this context, the decision to remove the insect from the arm is primarily motivated by the prospect of a reward, rather than merely avoiding suffering.

This example illustrates why certain actions are executed more energetically and vehemently in specific situations. Take, for instance, a person driving to their workplace. Initially, they have time, drive at a moderate speed, do not overtake slower

vehicles, and obey traffic rules. However, if they encounter traffic congestion, their arrival time is delayed, and they can't find a place to park their vehicle, they might change their behavior, increasing their speed, overtaking other vehicles, and competing for a parking spot. This behavior does not necessarily stem from avoiding an increasing suffering from being late to work, but rather from the perception that driving slowly, not overtaking other vehicles, and obeying the rules becomes an action associated with suffering when they are running late. This is because such actions are incompatible with punctuality, and since the person does not want to incur what is associated with suffering, they modify their behavior accordingly. This situation creates the impression that the action is carried out with greater intensity.

Similarly, in other scenarios, actions may be performed with greater intensity because something associated with a reward at a given moment generates a higher-than-usual reward, which in turn drives the action more energetically.

In the hypothetical case where an individual adopts both criteria simultaneously, that is, the pursuit of reward and the avoidance of suffering, it is important to note that, from my perspective, the predominant criterion remains the reward. An example is the life of a Buddhist who, through their path of liberation, seeks states of non-suffering, which are conceived as peace, tranquility, and satisfaction with life, constituting a goal in itself. This path is not undertaken to avoid something, but for the attainment of a desired state.

However, in the ethical and political realm, even if we consider these two criteria together, it becomes crucial to weigh the role of reward and high-reward states. This is because, just as with the reward, we must consider states of high reward as a criterion in conflict resolution. If we take into account the criterion of avoiding suffering, we should consider the possibility of minimizing suffering in conflict situations while ensuring the possibility of achieving states of high reward.

For example, if an individual initiates a conflict and causes suffering to another, the defense of the affected party not only ensures the possibility of achieving states of high reward but also the possibility of suffering less in the future. Even for those who seek reward as their primary criterion, if at any point they wish to avoid suffering to some extent, defending their interests would ensure the necessary flexibility to achieve it. In summary, the guarantee of achieving states of high reward includes the possibility of not suffering more than desired.

On the other hand, an individual who initiates a conflict and is guided by the criterion of avoiding suffering, as opposed to one who acts for the reward, does not necessarily need to resort to conflicts to achieve states of well-being with less suffering. Avoiding attachments, maintaining harmonious relationships, leading a peaceful life, and seeking mental peace are examples of actions that can lead to a life with less suffering. In this context, the defense of the attacked person would eliminate the conflict, while also guaranteeing the possibility of achieving high-reward states and not obstructing the possibility of reducing suffering.

Ultimately, it can be argued that if someone seeks to avoid suffering but is not willing to completely give up rewards, their motivation is influenced both by the avoidance of suffering and the pursuit of reward. However, in practice, actions that might seem driven by suffering or the avoidance of suffering are linked to states of reward, so that avoiding future suffering actually reflects a concealed state of reward—one in which we do not suffer, which is better than suffering. This analysis is supported by the actions we observe in people. Therefore, I conclude that in life, beyond the mere avoidance of suffering, there is reward; we act for reward, and there is more to life than simply not suffering—there are states of high reward.

Consider the notion of restraint or inhibition in our actions and how it is primarily related to the pursuit of reward rather than being mainly driven by the avoidance of suffering. In the case of stopping a vehicle when approaching a cliff, for example, the action of braking is performed to allow for a desirable action, implying that inhibition is subordinate to the goal of obtaining a reward. In other words, the vehicle is stopped because it is desirable from the perspective of safety, calm, and tranquility.

When we are near a cliff, we do not experience a constant impulse that needs to be inhibited to avoid falling into the abyss. Instead, we maintain a safe distance from the cliff due to the rewarding characteristics it offers: the sense of security, peace of mind, and calm in a potentially dangerous situation. Similarly, in the case of stopping a vehicle, the reward associated with the action of driving initially fades when we perceive the cliff, and the reward now lies in taking measures to ensure our safety. This leads us to execute the necessary action, whether stopping the vehicle or making an evasive turn, based on a reward.

n summary, inhibitions in our actions can be understood in terms of rewards rather than the avoidance of suffering. The action of braking a vehicle before a cliff illustrates

how the act of braking is motivated by a reward—in this case, the reward of safety and calm in a potentially dangerous situation.

It's important to note that the previous example of braking before a cliff may not be the best illustration of the issue, as in that case, the act of braking can become automatic, similar to a reflex response, without necessarily being motivated by reward. However, in more controllable and longer-lasting situations, inhibitions and restraints are likely related to rewards. The fundamental idea is that some actions are not performed because they do not involve a reward, while other actions are carried out because they are motivated by the prospect of a reward.

In the case of the cliff, we could argue that there is at least some reward feedback after having braked suddenly (even if it was initially a reflex action). The central question here is whether the avoidance of suffering is the primary motivator of an action, that is, whether it is the ultimate criterion that governs our behavior. Behaviors often described as inhibitory or restraining may seem to be driven by the avoidance of suffering, but it is important to consider that, in reality, they are related to rewards. Inhibition implies that something is being restrained, generally an action that obstructs the realization of a rewarding action. For example, when someone is being forced to do something they do not want to do, the behavior that inhibits that undesired action is motivated, primarily, by the preservation of a rewarding state, such as the comfort and security of a situation being denied to the individual to coerce them into doing the undesired action. Essentially, the act of inhibition is aimed at maintaining the reward, not avoiding suffering, and the non-performance of the undesired action is due to the lack of a desired reward associated with it.

It is important to emphasize that while this can be seen as a form of suffering avoidance, it does not constitute the ultimate cause or motive guiding our behavior. Instead, the primary driver of our behavior is more related to the specific rewards we maintain through our actions. When it is mentioned that one avoids suffering in a given situation, it does not mean that one ends up with nothing once suffering is avoided. The action is not merely aimed at eliminating suffering itself but is driven by a particular rewarding state.

We can view this process as a cycle in which one starts in a state of well-being, to varying degrees. When an unpleasant experience occurs, the action we take seeks to restore that state of well-being or reward, rather than simply eliminating the suffering

itself. The underlying motivation in these situations is the expression of a state of reward, which manifests as a pleasant feeling. This state of well-being drives our behavior, and the process continues until we receive feedback that reflects the highest possible reward.

It is true that some automatic behaviors are executed almost without thinking, and in these situations, the reward may not be consciously involved. However, even in these cases, there may be activation of reward circuits at a subconscious level, as our actions are often rooted in states of well-being and reward rather than merely the avoidance of suffering.

In the socio-political realm, the guarantee of achieving high reward states is closely linked to the state's ability to defend an individual attacked in an act of self-defense, as long as the individual was not the instigator of the conflict. This premise is based on the fundamental idea of guiding individual actions toward achieving optimal rewards.

However, the concept of how to absolutely ensure the possibility of attaining such reward states must be rooted in a more detailed consideration of particular situations, where such a strategy may be inappropriate. At the extreme, denying one's own life as a means to secure future states of reward, values, and pleasure, even when not denying another individual's life, results in an excessive loss. This is especially evident when it ensures, at least, the restitution of material value to the other individual, allowing them to continue their life, acquire values, and foster self-esteem.

It is important to emphasize that, as mentioned earlier, it does not align with the pursuit of the highest reward states to hinder others in the use of spaces and resources for their own purposes, under the argument that these people could still benefit from such resources and foster their self-esteem. However, in extreme circumstances, such as the one described below, where the nature of the situation practically prevents the cultivation of self-esteem through any action, the most sensible course is to take actions that generate the greatest possible reward over an extended period.

The ethical concept I propose involves seeking high states of reward, though it's important to recognize that applying this in certain contexts might endanger one's life. While extreme situations like natural disasters, accidents, or deliberate acts of destruction are not part of daily life, it's relevant to consider particular cases where modifying behavior would be necessary to ensure a higher level of reward.

For instance, imagine someone in the middle of a desert without access to drinking water who encounters another person with enough water for both, allowing them to reach the nearest town. In this scenario, the first person would try to persuade the second to share the water, which wouldn't require a total sacrifice from the latter since they would still have enough water for their own needs. However, if the second person refused to share, taking the water by force would conflict with their will, denying their right to use their resources as they see fit.

If the second person's goal with the water is to sell it once they reach the town, this aligns with their own interests and objectives. On the other hand, the first person's primary goal is to take the water needed to reach the nearest settlement. At this point, they have no other option but to take the water and impose their will, even though this imposition cannot ultimately be justified in terms of a reality separate from themselves. Despite this, they would proceed with the imposition.

It's important to note that the person being imposed upon could legitimately defend themselves in such circumstances, given that the imposition by the first person cannot ultimately be justified by an independent reality.

An active conflicting action is characterized by having a specific purpose (a cause) that requires the use of a means to achieve it. This cause is based on elements rooted in reality itself, that is, in the individual's goals and aspirations. However, the presence of conflict arises when the imposition of such an action cannot ultimately be justified in terms of reality, as it lacks ultimate objective grounds. In other words, there is no absolute principle or intrinsic "ought" in reality that supports acting according to the premise I propose here.

Each individual, consciously or not, determines their life path according to their own set of values and beliefs. However, if the goal is to achieve high states of reward, certain behavioral guidelines must be adopted. An additional complexity arises when trying to discern what constitutes a conflict for two particular subjects and, from there, determine if an active action lacks justification in reality.

The previously mentioned action of taking water in an extreme situation arises from the imperative need to preserve one's own life as the supreme value to ensure the possibility of attaining any degree of reward in the long term. It is important to

recognize that avoiding conflict in this case is virtually impossible without resulting in the death of one of the individuals involved.

Nevertheless, it is feasible to minimize the consequences of the conflict to some extent. For example, the person who takes the water could later compensate or somehow make restitution to the other individual for what they have taken, provided they have the ability to do so. This approach could be considered a solution in extreme situations. It is worth noting that, ultimately, the imperative need does not confer a justification in reality for the action taken against the water owner.

In the context of a state that has the responsibility to protect individuals from conflicts instigated by aggressors, its primary function is to act in defense of the victim. Although the state's action may conflict with the aggressor, its actions are ultimately justified in reality, as they are aimed at eliminating the conflict and protecting individuals' rights.

It is relevant to note that in situations where an individual has not provoked a conflict, state intervention acts as a measure of defense and not as an active aggression toward an innocent individual. This does not imply that the individual at risk must necessarily endanger their life if the state intervenes. Voluntary cooperation from the individual can be a means to emerge from the emergency situation. In an advanced society with an effective state, the state would be in a position to provide resources and solutions in extreme cases to ensure the defense of individuals and resolve the threat to life.

We are faced with an extreme situation characterized by the impossibility of cultivating self-esteem, the inability to achieve values that contribute to the enjoyment of life, and the inexorable proximity of death. In this dire circumstance, initiating a conflict appears as the only escape route. As illustrated earlier in the desert water scenario, choosing the action that generates the highest reward over the longest possible period becomes a necessity.

However, in certain scenarios, the alternative of death may be considered the most appropriate option. The suffering that would accompany the remaining alternative could nullify any prospect of attaining a higher reward, and choosing death might allow for the greatest possible reward in the time preceding death, given the circumstances. This raises the dilemma of whether one would be willing to live if it meant others could not,

and what a loved one would think in an analogous situation—whether they would be willing to live if their survival entailed the death of others.

In such circumstances, it is crucial to explore whether the will of that loved one would be to live at the expense of others' lives. Respecting the person's will and opting for their survival, even if it involves a high degree of suffering, could be the ethically appropriate course of action. The reward in this situation would be found in the act of honoring and respecting the person's will, while the opposite would constitute a betrayal of that will and the burden of others' lives.

Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that in such extreme situations, it is difficult to anticipate with certainty how one would react and what choice they would make, as these dilemmas present deeply complex and personal ethical questions.

The question of the presence of will inherent to the person or group of individuals immersed in these circumstances is rarely raised in such contexts, even though it might be one of the essential issues. From my perspective, addressing these dilemmas could offer a solution in light of the substantial potential rewards at stake. Consider, as a classic example, the problem of the runaway train or trolley. In this dilemma, a train is barreling uncontrollably towards a group of people on the tracks. An individual has the ability to intervene and divert the train, but such action would result in the death of one person situated on the alternate track. Variations of this dilemma have been posed; for example, the person sacrificed could be a small child or even the decision-maker's own son or daughter (refer to reference 21 in the "References" section for an expansion on this ethical dilemma and the distinction between doing and allowing harm).

The rational solution sometimes presented is the idea that it is acceptable to sacrifice one person to save many. However, let's pose the following question: what about the will of the people towards whom the train is headed? At this point, one is assuming what these people would prefer to happen; many might opt not to survive if the alternative involves the loss of an innocent life. An important aspect to consider is that the person sacrificed is unrelated to the situation. For many people, dealing with the moral burden of taking an innocent life is unacceptable. The individual who pulls the lever will have to face that burden, even if they try to justify their action by arguing that they have saved many others. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that they have also deprived an innocent person of their life. In a sense, both actions should be intrinsically connected on a metaphysical level, so to speak, for one action to mitigate the impact of

the other, if this is even possible. Generally, we tend not to view actions in isolation but consider them in terms of their independent ethical or moral character. This perspective leads to the notion that the ends justify the means, rather than appreciating the independence and considering that we are performing both a good and a bad action. This, in turn, undermines the development of a morality in which individual actions and objectives are integrated into a framework where good is the guiding principle.

Therefore, I assert that if our goal is to achieve high rewards, there is no way we can perform a wrong action for a virtuous end, as our goal involves our actions and these are not separate entities. However, some individuals may not understand or be able to grasp the implication of this premise at the moment of decision-making and thus will adopt divergent approaches. Nevertheless, the situation is akin to the act of sacrificing a healthy and innocent person to donate their organs to multiple sick people in need of them. Yet, we generally do not consider this action ethically acceptable.

In these extreme situations, the dilemma centers on the difficulty of fully applying the criterion of "high states of reward," as any action involves some degree of suffering and conflicts with the pursuit of self-esteem and long-term happiness. Therefore, we cannot implement this criterion in its entirety, as it is impractical to perform actions that provide maximum reward and are consistent with the notion of self-esteem and happiness.

In such cases, the most sensible course of action is to carry out the action that promises the highest reward over a more extended period. However, it is crucial to emphasize that this perspective is not applicable to the daily lives we share as human beings in society. In our everyday lives, we cannot resort to initiating conflicts nor consider it an option, as it would constitute a genuine betrayal of the pursuit of high states of reward. In the extreme case mentioned earlier, conflict is the only way to ensure the future attainment of high states of reward.

It is relevant to underline that the ethical approach proposed here is intrinsically centered on the individual. When we talk about initiating a conflict by the state against innocent individuals that undermines the attainment of high states of reward, we refer to the states of reward of the individual, whether the innocent individual or the individual representing the state initiating the conflict. It is essential to remember that an individual's actions are based on their pursuit of personal reward; while one may act to make another feel good, one never acts with the purpose of achieving the other's reward

but rather with the motivation of experiencing a personal reward associated with the beneficial action for the other. Reward is an intrinsic concept to the individual and manifests individually, without being collectively shared.

When addressing the idea of ensuring group well-being, it is necessary to reflect on how "group well-being" is measured. Does it mean that a large majority of people with high well-being justifies the suffering of a small number of individuals, even if the overall well-being of the group is lower than that of the majority in the first case? This question raises fundamental ethical dilemmas that must be carefully evaluated from an individualistic perspective, considering the states of reward of each subject involved.

It is not ethical to harm others if our goals are linked to achieving high states of reward. In the extreme case previously described, in the middle of the desert, there is harm to another individual that the person initiating the conflict must consider. However, in the initiator’s scale of priorities, this harm is not equivalent to the loss of their own life and their pursuit of personal reward. Although they would prefer that the harm did not exist, they must face it and strive to repair the harm to the individual as much as possible, as it was never their intention to cause damage. The decision not to start a conflict is made based on achieving one's own high states of reward, but in the extreme scenario presented, refraining from initiating a conflict would eliminate the possibility of attaining high personal rewards.

However, it is important to emphasize that we should not extrapolate extreme or borderline cases to everyday life in society. Life rarely boils down to such specific and extreme situations as the desert scenario I presented. While it is true that we can propose numerous extreme cases of survival and existence conditions, it would be a mistake to consider that what we would do in such situations or what we are urged to do in them is applicable to our normal, day-to-day life in society.

I want to highlight that, to ensure the possibility of achieving high states of reward, it is imperative to defend oneself in conflicts initiated by others. In each case, the decision to defend oneself will depend on the situation, and one should not start a conflict unless it is strictly necessary, whether by the individual or the State, taking into account the specific extreme situations mentioned earlier.

With the above, I am not suggesting that the State can start conflicts at its discretion when no one has committed any wrongdoing. Nor am I implying that in extreme or

borderline situations, we should abandon our ethical principles and stop seeking high states of reward. On the contrary, our actions in such circumstances should be aimed at maximizing personal reward given the situation and extending it as much as possible over time.

There may be situations so extreme that they do not allow actions consistent with self-esteem or the possibility of enjoying personal values. In such cases, any future opportunity to achieve personal rewards is likely to be severely compromised. In these circumstances, this situation is perceived for what it truly is: a tragedy. This differs from the previous case in that, in this extreme situation, one will no longer be able to enjoy values or cultivate self-esteem in the future, regardless of the actions taken. In this extreme scenario, one might even long for death, finding reward in the satisfaction of not betraying one's own integrity, not abandoning one's own values, or preserving them as much as possible.

In such extreme situations, one would not seek to initiate a conflict, as doing so would negate any remaining reward, like not wanting to live if it means causing the death of others. Life and the ability to achieve high states of reward become personal values, and one would not want to deny these values to others. An additional example would be sacrificing one's own life to save that of a child.

As mentioned in previous discussions, an individual's actions are motivated by the pursuit of reward, which is subjectively experienced and focused on oneself in relation to one's own actions. If an individual's goal is to experience high states of reward, they must prioritize their own reward and consider which actions lead to maximum personal satisfaction. Ultimately, there is no reason or purpose outside the individual that imposes the obligation to ensure another's reward, nor dictates that we must act to achieve some state of personal reward. However, if an individual genuinely desires to experience these states, they will act accordingly. If they are denied the opportunity to achieve high states of reward, they may try to defend themselves, depending on the situation, as this action is associated with reward and ensures the chance to reach high states of reward in the future.

When it comes to an unintentional action, where one uses a space that does not belong to them for an unagreed-upon purpose, a conflict arises with the owner if one enters, for example, another person's space and uses it in a way that conflicts with their interests. In this situation, one may leave the space once they become aware of the

ownership and how it is being used if they do not agree with the purpose. However, if one is forced to remain in the space or submit to the purposes established by the owner without their consent, because they are using that space for their own ends, it would be argued that one will seek to defend their ability to act, that is, to temporarily use that space which does not belong to them to advance toward high states of reward. In this scenario, the State should support the individual trying to leave the space, rather than supporting the owner with whom the conflict has arisen, as using a space for one's own ends, according to the criterion of high states of reward, does not justify imposing those ends on others in that place without their consent.

Another example is when someone uses their home to manufacture weapons with the intent of attacking others. In this case, the State could assume that a conflict with other people is imminent, before a victim becomes aware of the threat or before the aggressor decides to carry out the attack. As a preventive measure and to ensure effective defense, the State could justify entering the individual's property. This would be another exception to the rule. However, this does not mean that the State should adopt this stance in all situations. In most cases, the State should be cautious in assuming the need for such measures, as there is a risk that the State might exercise its authority illegitimately in the name of protecting people. In this sense, it is crucial to carefully consider when the State should assume a conflict is imminent and act accordingly, to avoid the State becoming a negative force in the pursuit of personal rewards.

From a political perspective, in my opinion, it is essential to have a State whose main function is to eliminate conflict against the attacked individual, acting in defense of the person who is being attacked. Additionally, the State could maintain a purpose as long as that purpose does not involve initiating conflicts. As I mentioned previously, independence is fundamental for achieving high states of reward. If one pursues a goal that does not necessarily lead to high states of reward in the long term, it is essential that one has the possibility to seek an alternative independently without being denied the capacity to act, as long as it does not create a conflict with others.

One's life should not be at the mercy of others' desires, even if those people believe they are seeking one's well-being and one decides not to follow directives that lead to high states of reward. Nor should it be necessary to control another individual's life to achieve high states of reward, as that type of control undermines self-esteem, making

the person fragile. Controlling others' lives or establishing conflicts, even if believed to be for others' benefit, turns individuals into dependent beings and perpetuates fragility instead of allowing them to express their strength and independence, exercising their individual cognitive abilities and cultivating their self-esteem.

The extent to which individuals can seek the best for themselves independently and persuade others that they also have this capacity ensures the possibility of achieving high states of reward. However, when conflicts arise, as I mentioned earlier, the way to ensure high states of reward or the possibility thereof lies in defending the attacked individual or their pursuit of defense, as well as defending the individual's ability to use spaces and objects according to their purposes, rather than being denied by the desires of others.

In the context of conflict and its corresponding defense, aimed at ensuring the attainment of meaningful rewards or at least the possibility of doing so, we encounter individuals pursuing conscious goals or purposes. These individuals have the capacity to consider the possible ramifications of their efforts towards achieving these goals, even though they may not be entirely clear at a specific moment. The crucial point is that they possess the ability to take responsibility for their actions and understand this concept. Although one may not always have precise knowledge of the immediate consequences of one's actions, there remains the certainty that these actions will have repercussions that will influence the individual's life.

However, what happens in the case of individuals who lack the ability to associate and the capacity for thought necessary to set conscious goals or purposes, understand the consequences of their actions, and appreciate the possibility of reaching highly rewarding states? This is particularly relevant in the context of young children and, more generally, individuals who are legally considered incapacitated. In other situations, when dealing with capable adults, from a socio-political perspective, the responsibility of ensuring the possibility of achieving highly rewarding states falls on the stance taken towards conflicts that arise between individuals, specifically in the defense of the victim.

The fundamental criterion for ensuring the possibility of high reward states is defense in conflict situations. However, when an individual's actions are directed towards someone who does not have clearly defined conscious goals, interests, or purposes, such as a young child, where the conscious understanding of the

consequences of actions is limited and cognitive abilities are not yet sufficiently developed to allow the individual to fully understand what leads to highly rewarding states, the notion of defense in conflict takes on a different dynamic compared to capable adult subjects.

The relevance of this issue is evident both at the state level, where the governmental entity is responsible for safeguarding the defense of the individual, especially in conflict situations where the victim lacks the capacity to fully understand the consequences of their actions, and at the level of parents, whose interests are opposed to any action that endangers the lives of their children, as long as this does not interfere with the pursuit of highly rewarding states, for example. The complexity arises when the parents themselves threaten the lives of their children, while the latter are unable to understand the negative consequences of such actions.

From the state perspective, which must act in defense of the children and preserve the possibility of achieving highly rewarding states, following the criterion of high reward states (as discussed in subsequent arguments), the relevant issue focuses on initiating a conflict with an individual who has not necessarily triggered a conflict, as the child may not have set clear goals and may lack the capacity, due to their level of cognitive development, to understand the consequences of their actions or relate certain actions to specific outcomes. Since the state's role is to defend rather than initiate a conflict with individuals who have not provoked one, which would be considered an oppressive action, the importance of this situation becomes evident.

Thus, it is pertinent to affirm that the notion of defense in the context of conflicts finds its limits in the previously mentioned situations. In such cases, defense no longer clearly serves as a means to foster the possibility of achieving highly rewarding states. In the previously mentioned instance, I believe the State must intervene in the protection of the child, for example, when the child lacks the capacities that would allow them to act like an adult in terms of setting conscious goals or purposes, consciously understanding the consequences of their actions, and having the possibility to understand what leads to highly rewarding states. Moreover, it is crucial that the State take a stand in defending the child when their parents threaten their life. However, in these borderline cases, the State must act with prudence and seek the maximum well-being for all parties involved, avoiding the most oppressive action possible (according to my criteria).

Therefore, at the point where this limit is established, the relevance for an entity like the State lies in minimizing oppression and defending the well-being of all parties involved, in line with our nature in seeking highly rewarding states. My personal definition of this limit does not imply that the State should reject defense or impose conflict in other scenarios, such as in the case of capable adults, where self-esteem and happiness require defense in conflict situations and the promotion of an independent life, without forcing dependence on people. If this were to occur, individuals should defend themselves based on the principle that they should not live in subjugation. Facing borderline situations, the crucial aspect is considering the highly rewarding states and the factors that generate them to determine the conduct of both individuals and governmental entities like the State.

A capable individual has the right to use spaces and objects for their own purposes. However, a question arises in the case of minors or incapacitated individuals, who lack direct ownership. As I mentioned previously, it is necessary to protect minors when, for example, their parents threaten their well-being. However, it is worth reflecting on the general possibilities of minors, given that they do not possess property in the traditional sense. In this context, although they do not have direct ownership, there is an extension of their parents' or guardians' property that allows them to use spaces and objects for their own purposes, which ultimately are linked to the objectives of the parents or guardians regarding the property. It could be said that minors have an indirect property right, in contrast to the direct right their parents possess.

The minor's right is limited in the sense that if their goals conflict with those of their parents or guardians (as long as the parents' goals are not harmful to the child), the minor will not be able to pursue their own goals. In contrast, parents can pursue their goals regarding their property unless this endangers the possibility of achieving highly rewarding states for others, which is considered an exception to defense in conflict situations, such as when the goal is harmful to the child, for example.

The possibility of achieving highly rewarding states is safeguarded by protecting the property of parents and defending it in cases of conflict, while also acting in defense of the child when an exception arises in the rule of defense in conflict situations, such as when the parents are the aggressors.

At this point, it is important to consider the concept of imposing certain criteria by the State, based on the assumption that some individuals are "better" or "wiser" (a type

of "rule by the best"), as opposed to the pursuit of highly rewarding states. This approach can lead to errors and the imposition of criteria that go against the pursuit of highly rewarding states, which can end up being generalized. This becomes relevant in the borderline case where the rule of defense in conflict situations does not guarantee the possibility of achieving highly rewarding states, as there is no conflict. The State must intervene to protect children in case of threats to their lives, for example. However, the issue becomes thorny when considering whether the State should establish additional criteria that parents must meet to retain custody of their children. Beyond certain limits, this becomes a complicated area, leading to the conclusion that while the State should guarantee the possibility of achieving highly rewarding states for children, it is problematic to assert that the State should ensure the possibility of achieving the highest rewarding states by directly imposing criteria that, according to its judgment, would maintain these states for a longer period.

The highest possible rewarding states refer to the presence of high states of reward (self-esteem-happiness) for the longest possible time and as early as possible, given the situation. For an adult, this implies that they should be allowed to use spaces and objects to pursue their own ends, thereby fostering their self-esteem and pursuit of values at all times. The imposition of criteria would be counterproductive in this context.

However, when it comes to a young child who lacks concrete, defined, and fully integrated goals within their personality, with the capacity to reason, reflect, and understand their objectives, it is important to consider whether the State should intervene to directly ensure the highest rewarding states. This would be equivalent to asserting that the State must ensure that the child’s upbringing is perfect, which raises various problems.

The question arises as to whether the State is sufficiently perfect to establish ideal criteria for child-rearing. Additionally, it is necessary to question whether the State has the resources and capacity to undertake this task and whether it should assume such responsibility. As I mentioned earlier, imposing criteria from a position of "being right" or "being the best" in the field of child-rearing, which must be unconditionally obeyed, would be contrary to the pursuit of the highest rewarding states and could lead to problems, as I have outlined. Therefore, we should not rigidly impose criteria on how to raise children in the name of generating the highest rewarding states, as this raises a series of questions and complications.

One could argue that the alternative, namely the perspective of those who advocate for a government "led by the best," also has merit, as not imposing their criteria could have a negative impact on the well-being of a large number of people. However, it is important to highlight that self-esteem is not necessarily related to imposition, except in the context of self-defense. Therefore, the imposition of criteria by these individuals would not be consistent with the pursuit of rewards, as it would nullify this positive effect, so to speak.

Moreover, given that even when imposing a criterion, infallibility cannot be guaranteed, a difficulty arises. That is, it cannot be asserted with certainty that the best is being promoted in all cases. It is a mistake to automatically assume that the best is being fostered. In view of these reasons, I believe that implementing a system of government based on "rule by the best" would not be the optimal position when it comes to maximizing rewarding states, especially in the case of competent individuals with the capacity to assume and understand the consequences of their actions. The imposition of a correct criterion is uncertain, and it cannot be guaranteed 100% that it will lead to greater rewards.

Therefore, even without considering the fact that imposition does not align with the concept of self-esteem, for both the imposer and the recipient, it cannot be said that self-esteem is guaranteed by imposing a criterion that may or may not foster it. The State must operate within its limitations and understand that it cannot guarantee defense in all conflict situations, despite its efforts. However, the act of defending does not contradict the possibility of achieving states of reward, such as self-esteem. On the contrary, imposing a potentially incorrect criterion that undermines self-esteem effectively negates this possibility and, therefore, is not an effective way to guarantee self-esteem through its actions. Despite the solid evidence that might support an idea, imposing it is not the correct approach, especially when it comes to self-esteem, which has dualistic aspects, like yin and yang, that must be considered. This is particularly relevant when dealing with competent individuals who can make decisions that, despite the evidence, may prove harmful.

Now, having presented these points, I believe there are exceptions to the imposition of criteria when the evidence suggests a conflict among capable individuals who do not impose such a criterion. In particular, we must consider cases where incapable individuals, such as minors who do not have the ability to assume, understand, and

agree on certain matters, are affected. In such circumstances, the cost of not imposing the criterion outweighs the benefits that would be gained by not doing so. Generally speaking, we do not advocate for imposition, as I mentioned earlier. However, there must be limits when it comes to conflict situations, where the State has the responsibility to defend and, based on the defense, must impose a specific criterion if it is optimal in terms of cost and benefit.

Consider the following case: it is plausible that private entities or organizations voluntarily funded by the State could be responsible for evaluating the quality of certain products. This would provide users and consumers with useful information to make informed decisions. Similarly, producers could benefit by obtaining quality certificates that enhance their sales. In principle, there would be no reason for a producer to oppose having their product analyzed unless there are hidden motives. Moreover, this could prevent fraud and should not harm the producer.

However, in the case of products with high potential risk, the State might intervene due to the possibility of a potential conflict, similar to what it would do in other contexts. A producer might choose not to pay for this service, but most people would prefer that such analysis be conducted. The State could take on this task, but it could also be seen negatively if the producer has the capacity to pay for the service.

In the idea that the State offers a service to control the safety and quality of food, in collaboration with private entities and with a voluntary payment system, the guiding principle should be risk assessment. In other words, the control should focus on elements that pose a significant risk. Controlling everything, regardless of its actual risk, would result in unnecessary and excessive expenses, given the low risk of many products, in the sense that no degree of control would substantially change their safety due to unpredictable failures.

Imagine we have substantial evidence indicating that a food product, for example, has the potential to be addictive and harmful to health. In this scenario, an entity, which could be a State-backed organization, requests the company that manufactures the product to include warning labels informing about this aspect of the product. If the company agrees to do so based on the evidence, no problems arise. However, if the company acknowledges the validity of the evidence but refuses to add the warning labels or to publicly communicate this information, claiming that it could reduce their sales, then a conflict arises, particularly with regard to consumers.

The conflict arises because the additional sales obtained by presenting the product without the warning label are based on what we might consider a deceptive strategy. Essentially, the product is being sold as if it were harmless and risk-free. If an individual is willing to take the known risks, they can do so knowingly, and in such a case, there would be no conflict. However, the situation changes when a person buys the product without being aware of the associated risks, as it is presented as safe. This is where a conflict arises. In other words, a producer can sell a product that has not been tested or analyzed by the relevant private or governmental entities, but this must be done under proper conditions in which consumers are informed that they are purchasing an untested product. Otherwise, it could be argued that fraud is being committed, which would require State intervention.

In the case of a person who cannot understand or assume the associated risks, such as a young child, the conflict becomes even more apparent. In the previously described situation, the company should be required to place a warning label on the product; otherwise, it should not be allowed to sell it. This is because selling a product without warning about the risks would create a conflict with those who cannot make informed decisions, such as children.

However, if the company disagrees with the evidence indicating the harmful nature of the product, the situation is different. In this case, a legal process should be conducted where the respective evidence and arguments are presented and contrasted. If, after evaluation, it is determined that the product is not truly harmful, the producer could sell their product without the warning labels. Forcing them otherwise would be a conflict without a basis in evidence and would limit their ability to maximize their profits. Imposing restrictions without solid evidence would be inefficient and costly for all parties involved, as it would be acting out of precaution without justification.

On the other hand, if the evidence supports that the product is addictive and harmful to health, even if the producer still disagrees, the inclusion of the warning label should be imposed. This could be seen as a form of "rule by the best," but it is necessary to address a conflict for the benefit of consumers. Although the State is not infallible and can make mistakes, in this case, the imposition is optimal for protecting consumers. At the same time, it ensures that the State fulfills its primary function of defense in the face of conflict, as failing to intervene when there is a conflict or potential conflict

would be a serious dereliction of duty and could set a dangerous precedent by undermining its ability to defend in any other case of conflict.

It is of vital importance that the State always fulfills its function of defense, even when it imposes measures due to the perception of a conflict. We expect the State to defend us in the future, even when it might initially seem that we are generating a conflict. However, the State can make mistakes and unjustly establish conflicts, which goes against its fundamental duty of defense. This is a serious issue and must be addressed.

We must distinguish between situations where the State errs by mistake and situations where it does so deliberately, knowing that it is not protecting the possibility of high states of reward. The latter situation is more concerning and dangerous to our interests, as it undermines our trust in the State's ability to protect us. It is crucial that the State acts optimally and imposes measures only when the evidence supports the existence of a conflict.

Another important case concerns the education of minors. Suppose evidence suggests that a particular form of teaching harms children by indoctrinating them with irrational ideas. In such circumstances, the State should not allow this education to be provided to minors, as long as it respects their ability to develop self-esteem and achieve high states of reward. Minors do not have the capacity to understand or assume the associated risks, so they cannot consent to receive harmful education, just as someone cannot make an informed purchase without being aware of the risks involved.

Guardians may disagree, and the process to address this situation should be similar to the one described in the previous case. However, this measure should not be applied indiscriminately in all cases. The State cannot guarantee maximum states of reward in all aspects, not even for minors. It is only optimal when the alternative is harmful and supported by solid evidence. Imposition must be applied with caution and only in circumstances where the protection of minors' self-esteem and states of reward is at stake.

In the axiomatic context of the State, the notion of imposition acquires a particular nature. This concept is based on the fundamental premise that no one can impose their criteria on others, although it is itself a criterion. However, when considering the

principle of "rule by the best," a new layer of imposition is introduced that operates independently of the State's basic criterion.

Completely eliminating the State as an entity would not solve the problem of imposition, as people would continue to impose their own criteria similarly to what happens under State authority. It is important to note that the imposition often attributed to the State is generally limited to situations where the State intervenes to maintain order and restrict those who create conflicts or act harmfully to society.

Returning to the idea of guaranteeing the possibility of experiencing high states of reward in younger individuals, we must consider that the key lies in maintaining at least the possibility of achieving these states. Understanding what constitutes a high state of reward and how it can be achieved is fundamental in this context. As long as the viability of reaching these states is maintained, we can consider that we have reached an optimal point.

The essence of high states of reward and how to guarantee their possibility is a fundamental principle. We start from the premise that, to maintain this possibility, we must avoid scenarios where a group of individuals dictates what we must do and forces us to comply. If defending this possibility requires a different stance from the State, then we must be willing to modify the circumstances.

When it comes to young children, ensuring the possibility of experiencing high levels of reward involves protecting their lives from aggression or threats, whether through actions that directly endanger their lives or compromise their well-being, such as nutrition. It also means preventing neglect and abuse, and allowing children to thrive in their environment, fostering self-esteem and happiness. In a modern and advanced society, this would require proper education, social interaction, and the opportunity to engage in various activities that promote self-esteem.

These are the minimum requirements to ensure the possibility of experiencing high levels of reward for children. Considering the possibility of achieving the highest states of reward would be extremely complicated and should not be a determining factor. Consequently, the State should not impose specific criteria in this area, as by refraining from doing so, it preserves the possibility of children reaching the highest states of reward.

It is undeniable that parents or guardians may make mistakes in raising their children, but they also have the capacity to learn and improve their parenting skills. If the State were to intervene at the slightest mistake and take over the upbringing of children, even when the possibility of high levels of reward remains, it could do more harm than good. This is due to various reasons, as I mentioned earlier, including the risk of denying the possibility of achieving high levels of reward or reaching the highest possible states of reward, due to imposed criteria. In some cases, State intervention might be the exception, the optimal alternative, but only when the possibility of children experiencing high levels of reward is threatened, and inaction would constitute a neglect of the State's duty to protect minors.

A child's ability to use spaces and objects for specific purposes is limited compared to that of an adult. In a nation, the idea of allowing a person to use spaces and objects for their purposes stems from their ability to experience high levels of reward and to support this criterion. Both aspects must be in harmony for this to work.

An adult who has the ability to define their goals clearly and coherently can rationalize those goals. Even if they lack absolute clarity about their goals, they can recognize this lack of clarity and take it into account in their decision-making and actions. This means that the person has the ability to take steps that contribute to achieving high levels of reward. This applies to all adults without specific cognitive difficulties. Although they may make mistakes or harmful decisions, they possess the capacity to improve their actions over time.

However, in the case of an individual unable to achieve such levels of clarity and coherence in their goals, their actions may lead to self-destruction. Additionally, they lack the ability to independently establish better-grounded actions, as their cognitive development does not allow them to reach such a degree of independence.

As a child grows, they gradually begin to use their parents' property and, over time, gain a greater degree of independence, eventually becoming an adult. However, during this stage, they cannot have absolute control over property, as they are still in the previously mentioned state of limitation. At this juncture, it is difficult to determine whether clear conflicts or agreements exist. This difficulty arises due to the absence of concrete and coherent goals, as previously mentioned, or the possibility that a goal might change abruptly within a short period, without a clear justification. In such

circumstances, it becomes challenging to determine whether the individual will agree or disagree with a decision.

The acquisition and retention of property generally involve two fundamental considerations: agreement and the ability to defend oneself in the event of potential conflicts. Therefore, the State's focus on ensuring the possibility of experiencing high levels of reward for children or incapable individuals relates to the aforementioned points: safeguarding these individuals from direct threats or aggression to their lives, such as those that might endanger their life or their means of subsistence, like food. Additionally, it seeks to prevent neglect and abuse in other areas while fostering opportunities for the child or incapable individual to develop within their context and cultivate self-esteem and happiness.

Parental and State supervision of a child's actions, particularly when the conditions necessary to ensure the possibility of experiencing high levels of reward are not met, illustrates how certain guidelines might be established on what can be done, with the aim of preserving the potential for high levels of reward. Some might argue that this justifies imposing criteria on adults, but the cases are not directly comparable.

Firstly, the notion of conflict differs significantly between adults and children, presenting an important challenge. Secondly, the concept of self-esteem cannot be applied in the same way to children as it is to adults, because children have not fully developed the reasoning and decision-making abilities that adults possess. Adults are expected to understand the implications of their actions and take responsibility, while children, due to their developmental stage, cannot do so to the same extent. Therefore, it is essential to guide children from an early age and not expect them to make crucial decisions on their own, as that would be detrimental in their case. For instance, waiting years to see if a child decides to attend an educational institution would be counterproductive.

Thirdly, while the cultivation of self-esteem largely depends on a child's skills and achievements, adults play a crucial role in creating opportunities for children to reach high levels of reward. As children gain greater independence, they experience an increase in self-esteem, a sense of competence, and the ability to complete tasks on their own. Extending this level of dependence into adulthood could diminish self-esteem and the possibility of reaching elevated reward states, as the increase in these states during childhood is directly linked to the degree of independence the child acquires.

In this regard, I believe there should be a gradual increase in the legal responsibilities of individuals who are not fully capable, as it is unrealistic to assume that all abilities are acquired simultaneously upon reaching a specific age, like 18. The assignment of responsibilities should be progressive and tailored to each individual's capacity and development, allowing minors to take on legal responsibilities in line with their skills and maturity. This approach would open up a range of possibilities grounded in the principle of high reward states. Many minors are already capable of handling various matters, and this approach could foster a more appropriate and coherent development of their skills and responsibilities as they transition into adulthood.

It's crucial to remember that the cultivation of self-esteem within a social context, in interactions with other adults, is an ongoing possibility for mature individuals. Adults have the ability to refine their criteria and goals independently, thanks to their development and life experience. However, the possibility of reaching the highest possible reward states can be compromised by external impositions and conflicts.

As I mentioned earlier, the purpose of the State, according to my perspective, is to ensure the possibility of experiencing high reward states and the potential to achieve the highest reward states. This goal is accomplished in two ways: first, by defending against conflicts and promoting the freedom for individuals to use spaces and objects for their purposes.

In the case of minors or individuals who are not fully capable, defending against conflicts and granting absolute freedom to use spaces and objects for their purposes present challenges, as these individuals do not have the full capacity to exercise such freedom. This does not mean that minors lack the possibility of experiencing high reward states or developing the ability over time to use spaces and objects for their purposes, as well as defining clear and integrated goals. These possibilities are ensured through protection against threats to their life, prevention of neglect and abuse, and the promotion of their development so that they can cultivate self-esteem and happiness within their context.

This principle applies not only to young children but also to older ones and other individuals who are incapable, including a newborn, who possesses these possibilities, even if they are more focused on the future. For instance, if parents attempt to harm their newborn, they are denying the possibility of experiencing high reward states—a criterion the State defends and is responsible for protecting.

This reasoning extends to the case of an unborn fetus or a human being from the moment of conception. Although these individuals have not yet developed the ability to manifest goals and criteria in an evident way, they possess the potential to experience high reward states, as well as the possibility of defining goals and criteria in the future. Therefore, this perspective reinforces the need to protect their life and well-being from the moment of conception, as it safeguards the possibility of achieving high reward states and developing autonomy in the future.

Just as in the case of a newborn, who does not yet have the ability to act independently but harbors the potential to do so, if the parents were to decide to harm the baby, it would be necessary to protect them. In other words, the realization of their potential to achieve significant states of reward must be safeguarded. It is the State's responsibility to ensure the viability of experiencing these states of reward, and the situations mentioned represent instances where this possibility is threatened.

It is essential to clarify a crucial aspect: human nature dictates a period in an individual's life when they are in a condition of high dependency, requiring the care of others to continue existing and aspire to high states of reward. When parents are unwilling or unable to care for their newborn, mechanisms such as adoption exist to ensure the child's well-being. Similarly, the State can intervene and remove custody from parents who attempt to harm their baby.

The dilemma arises in the case of a mother, for example, who wishes to terminate her pregnancy, as the State cannot take custody of the fetus, given its dependence on gestation within the mother's womb. This is a borderline situation, akin to that of a newborn: the fetus has no defined goals, cannot engage in negotiation, and no conflicts arise. Moreover, it is in a state of dependency, with its only opportunity to continue existing and experience satisfying states of reward being the continuation of its gestation with the mother.

If medical science were able to halt the gestation process and transfer it to another person with minimal risks, it would present a different situation. However, since the fetus cannot be relocated, the gestation itself can impact various aspects of the mother's life related to her self-esteem and happiness. Terminating the fetus, or abortion, would deny its potential to experience rewards. It is crucial to remember that it is the State's obligation to ensure the possibility of achieving significant states of reward.

First, we must understand a fundamental aspect: there is no conflict here. It is difficult to argue that the fetus is in conflict with the mother. Conflict typically involves issues of property, and the mother retains her property rights—she can still use spaces and objects for her purposes. One might extend this concept by saying that a person doesn't want to gestate in their own home. This doesn't mean that the home can no longer be used for its intended purposes; if someone doesn't want a fetus to develop in their home—or even within their own body—a transfer might be possible, and the original purpose for the property remains intact.

While one might say that they wish to live in their house without gestating a fetus, this does not mean they are unable to use the house for their purposes. The issue is that the purposes are mutually exclusive given the current situation. For example, one can live in their house, but that will involve gestating a fetus due to their circumstances. It's akin to saying that if the roof of one's house is blown off, and they wish to live there without getting wet from the rain, these are mutually exclusive purposes under the current situation. If someone wants to live in their house, until the roof is fixed, they may get wet. If they don't want to get wet, they won't be able to live there for the time being, but they can still determine the purpose for which the house is used.

One could argue that they can use their property to perform an abortion, where no conflict with the fetus is possible. However, as I previously emphasized, one cannot use their spaces and objects for just anything. The limit is reached when the possibility of achieving high reward states or maximum reward states is denied, as this is what the State is established to protect, according to the principle of high reward states. In such cases, the State defends the one being harmed, even if this involves actively initiating a conflict. This is a limitation on conflict, as I mentioned earlier. There are situations where no conflict exists, yet someone directly denies another's possibility of achieving high reward states, and abortion seems to be one of these cases.

In this context, it is suggested that the State must take a protective stance regarding the life of the fetus, as this perspective impedes the possibility of achieving high reward states. But in what sense does this occur? It is argued that the fetus does not enter into conflict with the person, but it does limit the realization of optimal and maximum reward states. It could be conceived that, for a limited period, challenges and complications might arise in various areas of the individual's life, influencing their current self-esteem and happiness in multiple ways. However, it is important to note

that this influence is not permanent and does not irreparably affect the possibility of achieving reward states at their highest level.

Let's reconsider some previous arguments almost verbatim. Firstly, as noted, one might argue that another person's activity limits the possibility of achieving high levels of reward for oneself. Even if that person does not create direct conflict, if you market a certain product and someone else develops a superior one, your ability to sell your product is impacted, which in turn affects your self-esteem. One could argue that this directly justifies preventing the other person (creating conflict) from producing the better product, thus allowing you to continue selling your own. However, let's examine the situation closely. If there is a superior product or if someone has the ability to produce it, what level of self-esteem can I derive from my product that is no longer as outstanding? The current possibilities are no longer the same, as there is another person capable of offering something superior in the same field. This example illustrates how the reality around us can change, affecting the circumstances of our self-esteem.

The presence of natural disasters, as well as the actions and abilities of others, are elements of the surrounding reality that influence the circumstances in which self-esteem and happiness are cultivated. In fact, claiming that what one does is more complex and out of reach than what others can achieve, even by denying the possibility that someone else could produce a superior product, would be a dishonest attitude toward oneself. Should the other person then give up their self-esteem for a lower standard in their achievements? As mentioned earlier, this is akin to someone developing a flawed theory about the universe, and another person proving it false. If self-esteem is strongly tied to the truth or falsity of the theory, can one maintain self-esteem by denying the other person the opportunity to prove the theory false? The answer is no; under such circumstances, no self-esteem would be gained.

To prevent these scenarios from materializing, it would be practically necessary to stop people from engaging in activities of their choice. However, this would affect the degree of satisfaction and reward that people can gain from the achievements of others. A producer who opposes the creation of a superior product is depriving not only themselves of the potential reward of that product but also others who wish to obtain the improved product. Moreover, by acting in an obstructive manner instead of cultivating their own self-esteem, they would be denying their own personal growth. Extrapolating this logic to the entirety of human activities, accepting the criteria of that producer

would significantly affect the highest possible levels of reward, as it would deny the benefits of others' activities while neglecting the cultivation of self-esteem.

Getting to the heart of the matter regarding the highest possible states of reward, as I've previously noted, these are not compromised by the activity of a producer who creates a superior product. In fact, they would be jeopardized if the producer and others like them were denied the opportunity to use spaces and resources for their purposes, for the production of their creations. Telling the producer to create a different product would deny them the highest states of reward, as that person might achieve a high level of self-esteem and happiness through the success of their product. This would not be possible if they were prevented from developing that product by being denied access to the necessary spaces and resources. It is crucial to confirm that the product is successful, demonstrating its quality, efficiency, utility, and the satisfaction of others. Without this validation, the self-esteem derived from simply creating something would be diminished, thus compromising the highest possible states of reward.

Reality is dynamic, and we must accept this change. If my product is no longer competitive, I must strive to improve it or seek other ways to cultivate my self-esteem. This is the proper path to achieving high states of reward. Remaining static with what exists and denying others the opportunity to develop their products means not cultivating self-esteem. This isn't about what I can achieve, but about what I cannot, revealing my limitations and a dependent attitude toward others. Denying others the opportunity would negatively impact the highest states of reward I can achieve because I would be compromising my self-esteem with something false, simpler, or less useful, straying from the essence of what I am capable of, thus affecting my ability to attain the highest states of reward.

Moreover, the producer still retains ownership of their products and can attempt to use them in various ways, even if selling them becomes more difficult. As I mentioned earlier, for capable adults with defined purposes, conflict (when property is denied) becomes the critical scenario where the possibility of reaching the highest states of reward can be suppressed. The essential role of the State, in this context, is to defend against such conflict.

There are exceptions where the possibility of reaching high states of reward and the highest possible states of reward is denied, even when there is no apparent conflict, and yet this denial affects the person committing the aggression. However, this situation

does not apply to the scenario I've just outlined. Additionally, there may be cases where someone initiates conflict as the only way to preserve their existence. In such cases, the State has the responsibility to defend the person being attacked but also to safeguard the life of the one initiating the conflict and their potential to achieve high states of reward. This approach makes sense, as people do not wish to be subject to aggression, and a lack of alternatives could lead to new conflicts. For example, if the conflict arises from an unwanted fetus by a mother, the fetus's only chance to continue its existence is for the pregnancy to proceed. In this context, the State must ensure both the life of the fetus and the mother's possibility of self-esteem and happiness, including her highest states of reward.

As I previously mentioned, the notion that the State should protect the possibility of high states of reward for minors, as well as the highest possible states of reward, applies not only to capable and adult individuals but stems from the overarching criterion of high states of reward. This approach aligns with the preservation of self-esteem, as harming the lives of minors—and what those lives represent, namely the possibility of high and maximum states of reward—could negatively impact our own self-esteem. It is a way of acting and treating those who have the potential to achieve high states of reward. Moreover, it is a commitment we owe to ourselves by putting ourselves in the place of a child. From a child's perspective, having the protection of the State during one of the most vulnerable stages of existence is desirable and constitutes a way of safeguarding the possibility of the highest criterion of life: high and maximum states of reward.

A similar dynamic to the one previously discussed regarding the producer could be applied to the case of a woman carrying a fetus. In general, the mother's ability to use spaces and resources for her purposes is not directly affected, just as the producer, who now finds it more difficult to sell his product but can still do something with it without direct impediments. The mother, by owning property, can continue to carry out actions she deems relevant to cultivate her self-esteem and happiness. The direct conflict in this case is that the mother, if she does not want the child, is carrying a pregnancy in a space that she does not allocate for that purpose and is instead using for her own objectives.

Analogous to the producer, the mother's highest possible states of reward are not directly affected. Although her situation has changed, presenting possibly new challenges—much like the producer who is challenged to improve—the condition is not

permanent, and there are alternative possibilities that do not necessarily include abortion. In fact, abortion could affect the highest possible states of reward for both the fetus and the mother, given that the situation or context has inevitably changed. From this point on, the way the situation is managed will determine the highest possible states of reward.

In this case, I propose that, unlike the defense against conflict, which helps to maintain the highest possible states of reward, abortion could have the opposite effect in this regard. If the mother decides to continue with the pregnancy and later opts for adoption, there is still the possibility of achieving high states of reward. Although, as I have suggested, having the child could impact various aspects of life related to self-esteem and happiness, the option to cultivate these states positively remains. The situation differs when there is a direct conflict against oneself, eliminating the possibility of achieving the highest states of reward, which happens when the decision is made to end the life of the fetus.

Although it may require greater effort in various aspects of life when having a child, the choice to terminate the life of the fetus completely eliminates the opportunity for that being to reach high and maximum states of reward. Following the example of the producer or the theorist who develops a specific theory, if circumstances change and a superior product emerges or the theory is proven false, believing that self-esteem can be cultivated by staying in that situation is misguided. The same applies to the mother; eliminating the fetus on the grounds that it will affect various aspects of her life, such as academics, work, social, and interpersonal relationships, would be contrary to her self-esteem and happiness.

The fundamental question remains: Are we truly cultivating self-esteem and happiness by accepting the challenge of motherhood while simultaneously eliminating the possibility of the fetus's life? Let's consider other relevant aspects in this reflection. We do not claim it is ethical to remove life support from a person in a coma, and such an action is carefully evaluated in cases of brain death. What is the fundamental difference in this scenario? It is the presence or absence of the possibility of high states of reward, a characteristic that also exists in a human being at the embryonic stage.

If we assume that keeping the fetus and seeking a fulfilling job is the way to cultivate self-esteem and happiness, similar to how a producer seeks to improve their product to achieve high states of reward, we cannot overlook that this pursuit involves

the existence of high states of reward that can be sustained over time. The situation may no longer allow the cultivation of self-esteem and happiness in the same way as before. However, the possibility of working towards other goals still exists, even though circumstances have changed and become more challenging. These new goals would still be aligned with self-esteem and happiness.

Some might argue that in the case of conflict, one has the right to defend oneself, and this is true. However, in this situation, that defense, which would involve the elimination of the fetus, would go against one's own states of reward. Eliminating life and the possibility of high and maximum states of reward to achieve something would no longer be consistent with self-esteem. The mother could continue to cultivate her self-esteem even by keeping the child; in contrast, by denying the child's life, she eliminates the possibility of high and maximum states of reward for the child and, from my perspective, undermines her own self-esteem. This is because it creates a situation where achieving what one desires involves the destruction of another human being.

For these reasons, I argue that the ideal situation involves the State's protection of the fetus's life and, in similar circumstances, personal defense. However, the situation would be different if someone attempted to force a pregnancy, in which case the mother should be protected from such an imposition.

In the context of the abortion debate, we have observed a decline in the appreciation of the effort, ability, and life of others. Abortion is often considered the automatic solution to difficulties, while alternatives like adoption, which could contribute to the well-being of the person in question and those who wish to become parents, are not immediately considered.

What is the real impact of a nine-month pregnancy on the ability to ruin an academic or professional career, as is often argued in favor of abortion? These expectations may be exaggerated. The fatalistic claim, lacking common sense and disconnected from reality, suggests a lack of proper consideration. People may be judging this issue incorrectly or hastily.

On the other hand, raising a child does involve challenges, but these should not be equated with the value of life itself. Yet, many of the reasons given for why a mother might consider abortion are judged with that weight, despite the fact that in daily life we

face more challenging situations without resorting to attacking or destroying the life of another. This reveals a significant error in reasoning.

Considering the above, I argue that the state should not support abortion but rather protect the life of the fetus and prevent the existence of means that, in practice, contradict such protection. When questioning whether eliminating abortion would coerce a mother into carrying an unwanted pregnancy to term, it's important to clarify that banning abortion does not equate to the direct imposition of a pregnancy, akin to the forced implantation of an embryo. Instead, the state would be denying the option to abort, not directly forcing a person to experience an unwanted pregnancy.

Analogous to preventing interpersonal conflicts by defending a person, state intervention in this case leads to the pursuit of alternative ways to achieve goals. The inability to abort would lead to the assumption of responsibility for the child's gestation, similar to how the state prohibits certain actions to ensure decent and productive coexistence.

It's valid to point out that the state does not directly impose the obligation to have children, just as it should not impose other actions. However, if a person is already pregnant, the state would not facilitate the termination of that pregnancy. For the reasons previously stated, I consider it appropriate for the state to prevent this type of action.

The same principle would apply in the case of rape, a sensitive issue and the subject of intense debate due to the suffering involved. In the scenario of a pregnancy resulting from such a violation, unless the possibility of achieving the highest states of reward for the mother is denied, abortion could have a similar impact in terms of self-esteem. I acknowledge that there are considerable doubts about whether the possibility of achieving such states of reward would indeed be denied in such circumstances. If a situation arises where this possibility is denied, the criterion of high states of reward should be applied to determine what should be guaranteed: the highest states of reward for the mother versus mutually exclusive possibilities.

It is crucial to emphasize that there are alternatives, and it is not predetermined that abortion is the only path in cases of rape. Once again, one's self-esteem and happiness could be negatively impacted by ending a life in response to difficult circumstances. However, there are alternatives that could allow for achieving high states of reward

despite the challenges faced. Working through the pregnancy and considering adoption as an option could lead to positive outcomes and help manage the situation, ultimately improving emotional well-being.

In contrast, abortion might be justified in cases of severe fetal malformations that significantly affect the possibility of experiencing high states of reward in the future. This is especially relevant when such malformations impact the parents' ability to attain high states of reward in the long term, given the emotional burden associated with raising a child with such conditions. However, in this context, I do not believe that priority should be given to one individual if it means denying another the possibility of high states of reward, considering the perspective of the fetus or embryo.

Additionally, it is essential not to overlook the inherent risks of abortion, even when performed under controlled circumstances. These risks could impact the potential for high states of reward.

It would not be consistent with the possibility of achieving high and maximal states of reward to force a woman to receive an embryo through implantation, as this would constitute an attack on her potential for self-esteem and happiness. Such an action would create conflict and hinder the opportunity to achieve self-esteem and happiness for the longest possible time (maximal states of reward).

In this context, reality does not become more challenging due to the normal circumstances of individual activities. It is not about one's actions definitively affecting the life of another human being, thereby denying that human the possibility of high states of reward, which would be contrary to self-esteem and possibly other values such as offspring and their protection. Instead, the possibility of using spaces and objects for one's own purposes has been directly attacked, creating a conflict between adults with specific goals and the ability to achieve high states of reward independently.

This scenario underscores the importance of considering the possibility of achieving high states of reward and maximal states of reward. While one person's actions might momentarily affect another's reality, denying or failing to pursue one's activities could leave others in a worse situation regarding their maximal states of reward.

When attempting to end the life of a fetus or baby, one would be attacking the potential for high states of reward for the developing being itself. However, the situation

differs when an embryo is forcibly implanted into a person. In this case, the person did not try to eliminate the life of that embryo, and their own life, actions, and the daily development of their self-esteem and happiness are independent of the embryo's existence. There is no dependency relationship, unlike the situation where the fetus is already in gestation.

The mother has not generated any conflict; on the contrary, a conflict is initiated against her if an embryo is forcibly implanted. In this scenario, there is an aggression against the mother's rights (her autonomy), and if perpetuated on a widespread basis, it would lead to a state of uncertainty where one's life could be severely impacted at any moment by the legitimized actions of others. This scenario represents a case where the possibility of achieving high and maximal states of reward for the woman is compromised by a state that seeks to ensure the same possibility for the fetus.

This could be a valid argument equivalent to why, in the case of rape, abortion could be legally permitted, as there is a forced change in the woman's condition, affecting her states of reward and the possibility of achieving them.

Faced with a contradictory situation where the state's function is to guarantee the possibility of high and maximal states of reward, it is crucial to base state action on the criterion of maximizing high states of reward, driven by the reward itself and the maximum possibility of it. In this context, the question arises as to how to act in situations where there is a conflict between the voluntary gestation of an embryo by a willing and desiring mother and a forced implantation that creates conflict.

Considering the criterion of high states of reward, the preferable scenario would be one in which the embryo is gestated by a mother who accepts it voluntarily and desires it. Conversely, if the embryo is forcibly implanted, creating conflict and denying the possibility of maximal states of reward to the woman, the preferable action would be not to ensure the same possibility for the embryo.

In a theoretically possible scenario where my existence depends on the harm and suffering of another, considering that non-existence might be preferable aligns with the concept of high states of reward. The ability to make decisions in extreme situations, such as choosing not to carry a forced implantation pregnancy, should be respected as a choice consistent with high states of reward. It is unjust to hold women responsible for the state of the embryo, as their lives and actions have been independent. Defending

women's freedom to decide and working toward alternatives that allow for the voluntary acceptance of embryos is an approach that should be supported.

However, I do not oppose assisted reproduction techniques, which involve the cultivation of embryos that may be discarded if deemed nonviable for pregnancy. The alternative would be to prohibit these techniques, but let's reflect on this. Suppose we place ourselves in the position of that embryo. In such a situation, we are given the possibility of existence, even with the eventuality of being discarded; nonetheless, we are granted that opportunity with its inherent implications, including the chance to experience high and maximal states of reward.

If that opportunity is directly denied, our existence is not generated in the first place due to the prohibition, depriving us of the chance to exist and achieve significant states of reward. Would it not be more favorable to allow artificial generation despite the possibility of being discarded? It seems inappropriate to prohibit these techniques under the argument of defending the opportunities for high and maximal states of reward for the embryos. The generation and subsequent discarding of these embryos do not contradict this defense, as the very act of generating them grants the possibility to the embryo in question.

Should we deny the possibility of generating embryos that could continue their existence simply because there is a chance they might not? This would be akin to denying people the ability to have children conventionally due to the possibility of miscarriage and the lack of continuity in the child's existence. Moreover, it would not be accurate to consider that the destruction of one embryo affects the fate of another, as each embryo's destiny is independent of the other.

In this context, the question arises regarding the consideration of animals. Shouldn't we also advocate for the preservation of their states of reward? Although we avoid conflicts with animals, the question arises as to whether their expressions of reward should be protected by the state. The criterion of defending the possibility of experiencing high states of reward applies to humans, as we are the only ones capable of manifesting such states.

The notion of high states of reward, such as self-esteem and happiness, is grounded in the perception of continuity, the management of time, the ability to abstract ideas and concepts, and, above all, self-awareness. These faculties are crucial for the

manifestation of such states and are not feasible in animals lacking these capabilities. Thus, the application of this criterion is limited to human beings, as self-awareness and the aforementioned cognitive abilities are fundamental requirements for experiencing such states of reward.

Beyond consciousness itself, self-awareness emerges as an element of utmost relevance in this context, particularly in its relation to the possibility of experiencing high states of reward. Self-awareness is intrinsically linked to these states because it involves the ability to establish temporal and conceptual connections between past and future experiences. Unlike animals, whose states of reward are more limited in time and relate to the momentary satisfaction of specific needs, humans develop a continuum in our experience, which broadens and complicates the nature of our rewards.

The raising and use of animals for food does not imply denying them the maximum reward they can experience, because although animals may anticipate future states of reward, these do not differ significantly from those they have already experienced. The lack of self-awareness limits animals' ability to establish temporal connections and develop a continuum in their experience, making each state of reward independent of the others.

In the ethical realm of animal research, it is possible to ensure that they experience their potential rewards, thus deriving benefits from such research. However, this statement may not apply to animals with cognitive abilities comparable to those of humans, which raises the need for further investigation on this matter.

Considering the current treatment of animals, choosing to reduce or eliminate meat consumption could be beneficial—not as a mandate, but as a personal initiative. This choice is rooted in the general desire to avoid causing suffering to animals and in the empathy we feel toward them. Ignoring these concerns not only results in animal suffering but also has repercussions on our own emotional well-being.

Returning to the previous consideration, it's imperative to address the possibility of experiencing high states of reward, which remains consistent regardless of a person’s stage of development, as mentioned earlier. While the argument of fetal dependency on the mother is sometimes used, it's crucial to remember that this dependency continues after the baby is born. Although it's true that the fetus depends solely on one person, and the baby, after birth, may not necessarily rely on a single person, it is still dependent on

someone. If no one is willing to take responsibility for the baby, doesn't it still deserve rights that warrant legal consideration and state protection?

This question is analogous to whether a fetus has rights before birth, especially under the consideration and protection of the law and the state. Although a person gains autonomy over time, there is a period after birth when the care and attention of another human being are necessary for survival. Essentially, in all aspects related to the defense of a human being, a baby does not differ substantially from an embryo or a fetus. However, in debates, the potential life of a fetus is quickly dismissed, while that of a baby is not questioned in the same way. This argument is a significant consideration against abortion itself.

When discussing the notion of choice in the context of abortion, it's essential to clarify this concept. There is indeed the option to choose abortion; however, the core issue lies in permitting this act to proceed without opposition. The argument that seeks to legitimize this act on the grounds of avoiding the imposition of a particular ethic or standard—claiming that some people consider it wrong while others do not—overlooks the fact that the state is founded on an ethic. Consequently, all individuals under its jurisdiction are subject to the same ethical framework.

It's inevitable to recognize that there exists a criterion by which the function of the state is organized and its existence justified. The crucial issue lies in identifying the most appropriate criterion for this purpose, as the state, by its very nature, operates within an ethical framework that establishes the norms and values shared by the society it governs.

Undoubtedly, there is a higher criterion that can objectively establish the possibilities for individuals and determine what constitutes a greater reward. Although each person is unique, we share an essential nature. As mentioned earlier, the higher states of reward and the ultimate states of reward represent this higher criterion, referring to a shared nature. Allowing individuals to pursue their desires without imposing conflicts aligns with and arises from this criterion. Even the most ardent advocates of freedom often overlook this aspect in the abortion debate, clinging to the idea of not imposing criteria or creating ethical conflicts. The fact that there is an underlying criterion is often forgotten, and it is sometimes automatically assumed that the absence of imposed criteria is inherently good.

It's crucial to recognize that people should have the freedom to act without conflicts, which aligns with the criterion of higher states of reward. However, this does not imply that by not legitimizing abortion, we are equating our actions with the imposition of criteria or the creation of conflicts, as might be argued. The defense of the possibility of higher states of reward, in this case, requires deeper analysis, as it involves protecting the life of a third party—in this case, a fetus.

Consider the role of the state, which, as mentioned earlier, intervenes to defend the possibility of higher states of reward for minors when their parents threaten their lives. In similar circumstances, we would rarely suggest that we should allow people to steal simply because some do not consider theft to be morally wrong. The underlying ethics in legislation are not based merely on individual preferences but on more fundamental principles.

While it is valid to argue about whether a fetus deserves consideration and rights, the nature of the matter is not determined by subjective opinions. It's imperative to approach the debate from a perspective that seeks objectivity and establishes facts based on clear and shared criteria, rather than relying solely on personal opinions.

I emphasize the perspective concerning the potential for achieving elevated states of reward. Theories have been formulated regarding the personality of the fetus or the acquisition of rights (using the term in the previously indicated sense) linked to the development of the nervous system or certain milestones in its progression. However, for our discussion, we will set aside such considerations and assume that when the state safeguards an individual from potential conflicts, its mission is not necessarily to protect the capacity for thought, reasoning, consciousness, sensation, or the manifestation of intense states of reward at a specific moment. It may be that an individual does not manifest such states at a given time, but circumstances may change, allowing for their eventual expression. The need for protection is not limited to the current manifestation of elevated states of reward.

A person is not required to constantly exhibit intense states of reward in order for the possibility of experiencing them to be safeguarded. Similarly, an individual might be in a coma at a given moment but regain consciousness in the days that follow; in such cases, their life must be protected from any threat. It's also possible that a person may not yet be capable of reasoning to a certain degree, understanding concepts and abstractions, or speaking at a particular stage, but with development and education,

these conditions can change, as is commonly seen in children. Therefore, what is primarily protected is the potential to manifest these qualities, which, according to our understanding, appear together only in human beings. Consequently, although neither a child, a baby, nor a fetus may manifest all or some of these characteristics at the present moment, due to their human nature, they possess the capacity to express them, and it is this capacity that is being defended. Following this line of reasoning, it logically follows that the fetus should also be considered and its potential to experience elevated states of reward should be protected.

I do not employ the concept of bodily ownership in my argument, because, as I have previously expressed, the ability to use spaces and objects for one's own purposes encompasses all bodily actions directed toward individual goals. Thus, it is more accurate to speak of the use of spaces and objects for one's own ends. Even if the concept of bodily ownership is considered, the notion arises that the use of the body in the context of higher states of reward cannot involve harm to others, unlike the situation presented in the case of abortion.

Pregnancy and gestation are inherent aspects of human nature, and individual development begins from conception onward. In this context, why would terminating life at a particular stage of its development be any different from doing so at other stages? When the state intervenes to defend against a conflict, taking the life of an aggressor may be justified if no other viable option exists. However, taking life unnecessarily, when another person's life is not in danger, contradicts the criterion of higher states of reward and does not align with the treatment we would afford another individual.

Both the individual and the state must strive to maintain the possibility of achieving higher states of reward whenever possible, without significantly affecting one's own life. It would be inappropriate, for instance, for the police to end the life of an unarmed thief who poses no immediate threat to anyone. The same applies to someone who initiates a conflict without realizing it. Even in situations where conflict seems to be the only apparent option, the state should not inflict disproportionate harm, as long as the possibility of achieving higher states of reward is not compromised.

The purpose of the State is to ensure the possibility of achieving high states of reward and to maximize this potential in conflict situations. Although the well-being of the victim in a conflict is given priority, this does not exclude the responsibility to

safeguard the possibility of high states of reward for the aggressor as well. The State must strive to reach an optimal situation, prioritizing the restoration of the victim's normal context while also guaranteeing the possibility of the highest possible reward for the aggressor, even if the latter poses a threat to others and must be imprisoned.

There is a notable tendency among staunch defenders of the legitimacy of abortion to downplay or disregard the value of life in gestation, viewing it as little more than a cluster of cells, disposable and comparable to a parasite. This life is attributed with a lack of humanity, an insignificance deemed unworthy of consideration. In my opinion, this perspective, rather than reflecting genuine appreciation, seems more like a forced attempt to detach from a reality that persistently manifests itself, in order to more convincingly support their stance. However, the reality suggests that, generally, we do not treat this life in such derogatory terms, especially pregnant women, whether they wish to have the child or not. This might indicate that, for people, life in gestation holds intrinsic value, which is part of our nature. It is telling that we do not refer to this life as a "parasite," a term that carries a negative connotation. Instead, we argue that it is not the fault of this life to be in its current situation. Those who choose abortion experience suffering, which reflects that it is not an indifferent act. Wouldn't indifference and the absence of suffering be the normal reaction if what was being aborted were merely a cluster of cells or a parasite?

However, as I have previously pointed out, I do not claim that abortion lacks legitimacy in all circumstances. If the pregnancy significantly affects the mother's ability to achieve high states of reward, then abortion becomes a reasonable option. Similarly, if the life in gestation presents genetic alterations or malformations that compromise its possibility of experiencing high states of reward, the option of abortion should be considered and allowed.

Returning to the broader issue of extreme cases, let’s consider another strenuous scenario: an individual who loses their ability to judge as they normally would, unable to clearly conceive goals, with diminished thinking capacity, and thus a reduced ability to reach high states of reward. In this instance, we make an exception, as the existence of conflicts with a person in such a condition becomes problematic; the individual does not have clearly established goals integrated into their thinking with other aspects of their life or other objectives, nourished by the use of normal judgment, despite the

common mistakes people make. In this context, preventing this individual from harming themselves would not be incorrect, according to the criterion of high states of reward.

Let's consider the case of someone who deliberately wishes to end their life, without being under the influence of altered or diminished thinking, as might occur in major depression. If this person attempts to do so in the presence of others, there would be no contradiction with the principle of high states of reward in trying to prevent them. The person's will deserves respect to the extent that it is expressed appropriately, in a suitable state, and within a particular context, whether in the company of desired individuals or in solitude, according to their preferences. Beyond the appropriate state, it is crucial to consider the right time and place in relation to others, respecting the possibility of high states of reward for everyone involved. While we may respect another's will, we must also defend our own integrity and well-being when necessary, such as when we have not agreed to share a space to witness an action of significant impact, like suicide.

In situations where someone seeks to harm themselves in a setting that is not owned by the person in question, we can resort to persuasion. If this fails to dissuade the person, we might then prevent them from acting, without denying the possibility of high states of reward, as we would be siding with the defense of the property owner, assuming the owner does not wish for such an action to take place on their property. This approach could extend to similar situations where we consider an action harmful to a person, even if it involves denying the use of spaces and objects for personal purposes.

The underlying drawback in this approach has already been addressed previously, as it does not align with the criterion of high states of reward. It does not agree with the autonomy of individuals who actively pursue high states of reward and their cultivation as criteria for action. Such actions are contrary to self-esteem, as I mentioned earlier. I'll reiterate that the possibility for another person to cultivate such states would not be respected if they were forced to take positive actions for their life and prevented from carrying out harmful actions, even if these do not conflict with others or affect the possibility of reward for third parties. In this scenario, the concept of self-esteem and happiness is distorted, as it eliminates initiative, the development of individual capacity, and the ability to distinguish between what is positive and what is harmful. Instead of appealing to the person's ability to make conscious decisions, they are treated as a

helpless being, incapable of taking responsibility for their life and guiding it toward beneficial goals.

A recurring problem arises with the idea of a "council of the wise" or a "tribunal of the just and excellent" that would determine the legitimacy of preventing others from engaging in actions deemed harmful to themselves. If we institutionalize this approach through the State, those who consider themselves to possess a certain moral authority, knowledge, and wisdom on the matter, and who presumably share the same values as a virtuous and responsible citizen, could still make mistakes, just like any individual. This opens up the opposite possibility: denying something that would actually be beneficial and positive for people. Such a situation contradicts the potential for achieving high states of reward. No group or institution is superior enough to guarantee infallibility in decision-making, which adds an additional layer of complexity and risk to this proposal.

In addition to the cases mentioned, there are others that could be considered exceptions worthy of specific analysis. I propose exploring the notion of a gradual transition towards independence, particularly in areas such as education and healthcare. The idea is that people would gradually assume responsibility for these aspects themselves. This perspective implies that people would not depend on others, in the sense of a public system, to provide for these needs. If individuals can manage education on their own, without state intervention, a more favorable situation is achieved, marked by independence, greater self-sufficiency, and expanded resources to face challenges.

It's worth noting that private education is often criticized, even though it essentially leads to greater solvency, independence, and an increase in self-esteem. However, a sudden shift towards this model could be counterproductive, considering that we are currently in a system where dependence on others has become entrenched, whether by choice or not. It's crucial to recognize that abruptly breaking away from this situation can be difficult. In this context, we advocate for a gradual transition, progressively contributing to the overall improvement of the situation, with the cultivation of high states of reward as a motivational criterion. Currently, it is often considered that having basic services covered socially is sufficient and represents progress, but this should not be the final goal. The real achievement lies in people being able to manage these needs on their own, and this is the goal we should be aiming for in the future.

Consequently, I propose a gradual reduction of state intervention, as an abrupt transition could produce the opposite effect. However, we cannot avoid or neglect addressing injustices that require immediate action. Therefore, I advocate for working within the system, seeking to change it gradually, as long as the alternative would involve forfeiting future higher levels of reward. We are currently in a borderline situation where we cannot act in accordance with absolute levels of reward due to coercive interactions that are difficult to avoid. Nevertheless, refraining from acting within this context would result in the denial of future elevated levels of reward, both for ourselves and for others. At this juncture, the option is to pursue the maximum possible reward, and I believe we can achieve this by generating a transition towards a situation that respects the possibility of attaining higher levels of reward. If the alternative—abstaining from acting within this context of coercion—leads to the greatest reward, given the nature of the conflict in question, then we should choose that path.

However, we should not entirely dismiss the importance of a public sector, which could play a role, even under the premise of seeking high levels of reward, in public projects. There should be no contradiction between this and the defense against conflicts. Additionally, there are other responsibilities that the State could assume or become involved in, considering projects where the risks or costs are prohibitively high to encourage private participation but are of critical importance for development. Examples could include the construction of interstate highways in certain countries or space exploration projects. Despite this assertion, we should subject this to deliberation as well, since we currently observe that private entities or groups are not hesitant to embark on risky ventures and take on capital losses. There is even a sense of adventure and a unique pleasure in trying something new, despite potential material costs.

Within the framework of state involvement, the tax system should be adapted, considering the primary rationale based on the notion of defense, especially after exploring the concepts of conflict and defense, and considering the other responsibilities of the State. It would be pertinent to shift towards a system where tax payment is voluntary but necessary, in the sense that there is an incentive to contribute voluntarily, particularly in the case of the State's protection against conflicts. Additionally, those who wish to contribute financially to specific projects for personal reasons or convictions could be allowed to do so. Mechanisms could be implemented for the State

to obtain funds through the provision of essential services, where although not everyone may choose to pay for them, there would be a group willing to do so when necessary. In an advanced society, the more affluent sectors could consistently contribute to these services. It is crucial to emphasize that this does not imply centralization of funds, as they could be distributed according to the structure of the designed system.

Additionally, a voluntary payment system could be introduced for additional initiatives, separate from essential functions. The goal would be to encourage voluntarism and reduce coercion. As we evolve towards this paradigm, the costs of such projects are likely to decrease, reducing reliance on the state as the primary agent in these areas. It's important to note that under this new approach, contributions to the state would be significantly lower than current levels, considering the inherent inefficiency of the existing structure. By eliminating the conflict with the state and basing funding on the effective use of specific services, more efficient spending is expected, with fewer opportunities for abuse by the state.

In this context, it's relevant to add that when the state imposes the confiscation of property, it deprives individuals of fully enjoying the fruits of their labor. This situation, along with the erosion of independence, negatively affects the highest states of reward. The inability to fully enjoy the results of personal effort creates a negative feeling, limits control and independence in various aspects of life, and ultimately introduces conflicts with multiple repercussions. Consequently, it impacts the combination of aspects I have termed self-esteem-happiness.

If the goal is to maximize free time, allowing people to engage in activities that satisfy them without being constrained by the need to cover the bare essentials for survival, a dilemma arises regarding the transfer of part of one's labor to others. The question lies in the validity of this goal for each individual, as it is often argued that one does not need much money to survive or be happy. This argument would justify, according to some, the imposition of taxes to transfer resources to others, under the premise that it deprives a person of additional free time that could be spent on enjoyable activities, sharing with family and friends, among other pleasures. However, this contradicts the principle of allowing each individual to pursue their own happiness, as the argument suggests.

If a person works eight hours, of which four are used to finance the free time of others, the question arises: why not simply work four hours and enjoy four hours of free

time? This goal should be applicable to everyone. Reconciling these aspects presents an obvious challenge. Universal basic income, which seeks to address this goal, is attractive by offering a substantial reward, especially in the short term, as its implementation could be relatively swift. However, the problem of its funding through income taxes on employed individuals arises. If the labor that finances this system is reduced, the viability of universal basic income is compromised. Additionally, as I mentioned initially, these policies introduce a dynamic of aggression in human relationships, which is not consistent with the promotion of self-esteem.

There are other safe and effective alternatives to achieve this goal that do not require imposing burdens on certain individuals. Exploring and developing such approaches can offer more equitable solutions that respect individual autonomy, thereby avoiding the introduction of conflicts and preserving self-esteem in social interactions.

I don't identify with the idea of accumulating wealth and flaunting it to demonstrate a false and negative status. I acknowledge that the wealthiest individuals don't need all the wealth they possess to experience happiness. However, introducing aggression and coercion to appropriate those resources goes against the principle of self-esteem that should guide our actions from the moral perspective adopted to achieve high levels of reward. It's important to note that today, great wealth is being used to benefit people through investments and donations, creating products and services that positively impact society. There are plenty of examples of this contribution to the common good.

While the main focus of this work isn't to delve into how to achieve the goal of more free time, it’s worth noting that we are making progress in that direction. In my opinion, the problem lies in existing barriers, such as deeply ingrained mindsets, especially concerning material status. We often work harder to produce and acquire status-related products that require extra effort to obtain but don't significantly contribute to our happiness. Another challenge we face is monetary expansion, which eliminates the benefits of increased production, as it leads to price increases instead of decreases, maintaining the need to work the same amount of time. These obstacles, in my view, are what hinder progress towards a lifestyle with more free time and a focus on true personal satisfaction.

In this ethical and moral context, I believe the priority lies in seeking the state of highest personal reward in the long term, centered on self-esteem and personal happiness. This goal is achieved by using one’s associative capacity, guided by reason,

to identify those things in reality that lead toward these ends and acting accordingly to pursue them in individual life.

A problem arises when an action is imposed on another based on one's own goals and criteria, overriding the other's ability to use objects and spaces for their own purposes. To ensure high states of reward, it is essential to avoid initiating conflicts, except in pre-established exceptional situations, and to defend oneself against the imposition of a conflict, unless the defense involves unacceptable risks, such as endangering one's own life or that of others, depending on the situation.

The promotion of defense by the State becomes very important in this context. I emphasize the notion of high states of reward as an end, and the association of things as a means, which includes associations of ideas, perceptions, and emotions. It is crucial to understand this point, even when someone suggests following instincts instead of overthinking. Even in that choice, the person has reasoned and associated various ideas, which guide their action, and deep down, there is a reward associated with it that motivates their behavior.

Thinking, through science, observation, reflection, and the search for evidence, is used to determine what things are positive for us and what is the best course of action in various situations. It is essential to reflect on our actions, though this doesn't mean thinking through every detail all the time. Sometimes, overthinking can lead to incessant rumination and be harmful. However, at times, it is crucial to think about our actions, especially when we are acting on false ideas that harm us. The correct and noble use of thought and the association of ideas lies in discerning when it is appropriate and beneficial to reflect on our actions and when it is better to rely on well-founded instincts.

The notion of following our intuition is often presented as wise advice, but it’s essential to take a closer look at what this concept actually involves. Intuition refers to the ability to perceive, feel a sense of reward for something, or be aware of something, sometimes without fully understanding why. It manifests as a feeling, a hunch, or a subjective impression that something is true or should be a certain way.

However, blindly trusting intuition presents significant challenges. Intuition operates in the absence of conscious information. Sometimes, it seems like we "intuit" something, but this doesn't guarantee that our perception is accurate or that it offers a

useful approach to the problem we're facing. This is because our brains don't necessarily store information about every subject, and intuition may be based on past experiences or patterns we're not explicitly aware of.

Saying we should follow our intuition implies, in a sense, closing our eyes and acting based on the first impression that comes to mind. However, this first impression can be arbitrary or biased by subjective factors. In reality, instead of relying solely on intuition, it's more prudent to acknowledge its presence while actively seeking information, observing, perceiving, and educating ourselves on the matter at hand.

Sometimes, the information needed to make informed decisions is subtly present in our awareness, and we might overlook this fact when attributing our choices to intuition. Trusting intuition shouldn't disregard the importance of actively seeking data and consciously evaluating the available information to make well-grounded decisions and avoid falling into arbitrariness or biased judgments.

It's not always necessary to delve deeply into reflection on a problem in the sense of generating complex conceptual constructions about its causes and solutions. Sometimes, the answer presents itself simply, even if its grasp may elude us. The ability to recognize this simplicity and adopt alternative perspectives to reach a solution can be more beneficial in certain contexts than elaborating intricate arguments lacking genuine appreciation of the obstacle at hand.

Likewise, in many cases, we may lack the solution but possess the awareness that additional information is required. This knowledge is empowering, though not everyone may perceive this need. This lack of understanding reduces autonomy, especially when relying on the opinions and knowledge of others at this level. Those capable of identifying this need know how to proceed and what the next step is, granting them greater independence compared to those who feel stuck and admit not knowing what to do, thus depending on someone who not only provides information but also guides them on how to proceed, instructing them to think and reason based on that information.

The dichotomy between following emotions or reason, when faced with the choice of one over the other, has been questioned by some, suggesting that such a duality doesn't actually exist. However, regardless of this perspective, the answer is still, intrinsically, a process of reasoning that refers to the associations a person has formed.

In this sense, placing association on a primary level is inevitable, whether the individual intends it or not.

The question itself arises as an intellectual formulation, and our subsequent actions are inherently tied to the resolution of our reasoning process. The proposed solution might suggest that emotions and affections should be substantive elements within the body of information that guides our decisions and behaviors. It's crucial to direct our attention to this aspect; however, if we identify a predominant motive that underpins our ultimate actions, it lies in the pursuit of rewards. In the background of choosing between different options that bring us gratification, the manifestation of insight becomes a desirable outcome.

Part Five

Building on the initial and subsequent ideas, my aim in addressing the question of God, under certain criteria, is to assert that existence or reality, as I have outlined in the first part, constitutes the primary foundation. These ideas carry specific implications: reality presents itself as the ultimate boundary, while existence, in causal terms, lacks its own cause. In this context, there are no causes for existence itself, but simultaneously, there is causality for everything that emerges from the form of existence, its primordial structure, acting as causes on a structural level, originating from the boundary and its form.

For us to exist, causality must manifest. Since reality is not causal in itself, it follows that there is an absence of ultimate meaning or purpose in things. Everything, ultimately, arises from something that simply is, where causality begins, being uncaused. From this perspective, things lack inherent meaning. Causality for us implies a lack of self-determinism, understood as effects without causes. Any form of self-determinism in this sense would mean that what arises from it is arbitrary and lacks real purpose.

Thus, I assert that the existence of an entity like God does not possess the fundamental relevance that has been attributed to the universe, regardless of whether its existence is the case. In this sense, any God, if existing, cannot confer meaning or purpose at a fundamental level.

As I have explained, it is possible to address two aspects of the nature of God: the material and the immaterial. Regarding the immaterial, which is considered as a God beyond reality, I assert that it does not exist. In the case of a God confined to reality, it may or may not be caused. If it is not, then everything that emanates from it lacks meaning, as God itself lacks meaning. If it is caused, then nothing depends on God. If the order and purpose that God could confer depend on a mechanism that generates the intention to establish order, then everything depends on the cause of that intention, not on God itself. If the intention is uncaused, it becomes arbitrary in the sense of not being determined by God as a purpose, and at this point, I question the possibility of any order that could originate, though in any case, it would lack meaning.

Returning to the initial arguments of this work, regarding God as an intelligent, omnipresent, and omniscient entity, it is maintained that God cannot transcend existence, as to be considered such, it must exist. However, it is posited that God arises from the form of existence, provided it is not equated with the form of existence itself. In this context, although it may be the initial reason for our universe, it is not ultimately so; rather, it is the intrinsic form of existence itself that is, if that is the form, it cannot be determined.

In the case of conceiving God as the form of existence, one could argue that this entity might fundamentally determine the characteristics of the world. However, this is not feasible, as such an entity cannot transcend itself and determine its own form. Consequently, its actions would simply be a manifestation of existence itself, without a cause giving rise to specific actions. In this context, the ability to confer a particular form to existence, resulting in a certain action, would lack a cause, as the entity itself would not possess it.

As mentioned in the first part, a God conceived as an action cannot be the ultimate reason for the existence of things. In the context of God as a form, it is not appropriate to speak of Him according to the established criteria, as there would be no intention, intelligence, consciousness, or similar attributes, since these would represent an action, which would not be present in such an entity.

Regarding the last point addressed, it's important to recall the initial reference to the property of primordial reality. In this context, the form of something in its primordial state is posited as unchangeable, at least concerning matter. When considering changes in material form, it is essential to account for alterations in its components, as without such changes, modification in form would be non-existent. However, the primordial lacks additional components. It is argued that the form of something in its primordial state is unchangeable, at least regarding matter, since any change would imply alterations in its components, which do not exist in the primordial.

As for space, it is suggested that it possesses the property of curvature, although it is proposed that the fabric of space may not constitute a singular structure. We should consider space differently from matter, as its form of curvature may differ from how modifications occur in matter. The possibility that space curves does not necessarily imply that the same logic applies to matter in its primordial state. It is argued that matter

and space are fundamentally distinct entities, and consequently, the modification of a primordial material entity is illogical.

Two possibilities are raised: either space does not truly curve, and there is another explanation for observations suggesting otherwise, or space is not a distinct entity like matter but, in part, the extension and separation of things. Even in the case of some modification, it is argued that it remains too simple, and even impossible, to harbor intelligence, consciousness, or intention. In the absence of modifications, which is the stance adopted, such attributes are definitively impossible.

The central issue is divided into two fundamental aspects. On the one hand, it is argued that God could not have driven a specific action or given rise to a particular world that was not aligned with His own nature. On the other hand, it is maintained that, whether we consider God as an action or as a primordial form, there is no ultimate reason for the existence of things nor a future purpose guiding their configuration.

The existence of an inherent limit to things is emphasized, a limit that even a God could not transcend. This limit excludes the possibility of an ultimate reason or purpose for the existence of things. Within this framework, two possibilities regarding the existence of God are presented: whether He has a cause or not. If God has a cause, then He cannot be the fundamental reason for the universe and ourselves. If He lacks a cause and is the primordial form of existence, He faces the limitations previously mentioned.

In the case of the primordial form of existence, it is argued that it wouldn't even be a self-aware entity in principle, as consciousness implies being aware of something beyond oneself. The primordial structure of existence is a boundary that cannot be transcended to account for something or infer its own existence. Even if there were multiple primordial forms, it is argued that this would be irrelevant concerning classical considerations of God since everything would be a manifestation of the primordial structure without a fundamental intention. Intelligence and consciousness, in this context, seem more associated with action rather than a primordial form.

It is concluded that the most fundamental aspect of the universe is not the mere existence of God, but the rules governing His existence, that is, the structure of reality from which God cannot escape, assuming He exists. Causality is highlighted as the most relevant aspect in this regard.

Considering the existence of God as a certain fact involves a belief lacking evidential support. However, this does not imply that people should refrain from believing in God. The possibility of God's existence in terms of action, for example, can be considered, though the reason to believe in it is an independent matter that doesn't necessarily contradict the lack of empirical evidence.

The choice not to believe due to a lack of evidence is presented as a criterion that some uphold in alignment with the pursuit of true knowledge, as long as it reflects reality. While believing without evidence can lead to illusions, that is, the conviction that something is true when it is not, in everyday life, people often form beliefs without direct evidence, and these beliefs serve certain purposes.

The need for certainty in some circumstances may lead to a lack of delay in judgment until sufficient evidence is obtained. In such cases, the search for material proof may be disregarded in favor of prior belief.

Although the desire to understand the nature of things is strong, it is argued that if truth is the highest priority, faith should have no place. Believing without evidence might make sense in light of certain underlying causes of those beliefs, which can be analyzed. However, believing in something simply because there is no evidence may be meaningless if the search for truth is the main motivation, unless the belief itself is the cause.

The presentation of evidence is considered essential in supporting claims, especially when the existence of evidence is doubtful given the claim in question. It is argued that the absence of evidence should be acknowledged in the appropriate context.

The hypothesis that God acts through human faculties is questioned if these have natural explanations. It is argued that if there is a natural explanation for human faculties, the hypothesis of divine intervention is meaningless unless God determined the mechanism by which these faculties were constituted.

The concept of God, defined as benevolent, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, as the cause of the universe and human existence, raises challenges regarding the presence of events considered "evil" or "wrong." It is argued that if God can prevent such events, His non-intervention results in contradictions with the traditional associations of His attributes.

The lack of understanding of the nature of the matter leads people to take seemingly contradictory actions. If God determines everything, He could prevent events that cause suffering. This raises the idea that concepts like "good" or "bad" do not inherently exist in reality, and therefore, judging God as benevolent or malevolent might be a human construct based on experience.

The notion that God granted humans the faculty of free will is often presented as an explanation for events considered "evil," such as wars and killings. However, the idea of absolute freedom is questioned, as it can vary depending on circumstances, and the possibility that humans are not completely free is explored based on the definition of freedom used.

The impossibility of avoiding certain natural disasters and the existence of diseases raise questions about the perfection of human nature as created by God. It is suggested that what is perceived as "evil" in the world is not exclusively tied to human free will, as external factors also contribute to such events.

There is a possibility that, in the context of avoidable events, individual human freedom plays a crucial role in both the prevention and the perpetration of actions that lead to death and destruction. However, this brings forth the paradox that, by granting humans freedom, God becomes, to some extent, the cause of both the potential prevention and the occurrence of such events.

It is argued that all human suffering could be considered the price of freedom. However, it is questioned why free humans could not be benevolent and refrain from committing cruel acts. This raises the question of whether an all-powerful God could create free human beings whose freedom is not intrinsically linked to "evil." This inquiry touches on whether God can or cannot escape the nature of reality.

The possibility that God created humans as inherently peaceful beings is explored, but it is noted that the original determination of human nature and freedom lies with God. It is argued that God cannot question humans about how they would want their nature to be, since, according to this view, the emergence of humans is predetermined, implying the determination of their nature and freedom.

Another argument suggests that suffering and negative experiences in human life might have a purpose or reason, even in the presence of a benevolent God. This

perspective seeks to reconcile the existence of suffering with God's goodness, arguing that there is a deeper purpose behind human adversities.

The nature of God is intrinsically linked to the criteria used to conceive Him. The assertion of belief in God may lack meaning without specifying the criteria applied. The question of God's existence may arise as a cause to explain the creation and origin of all things, leading to an inquiry into God's own nature and His existence prior to the creation of the universe.

The notion that God has simply "always" existed, without a cause that brought Him into being, raises questions about the nature of His existence prior to the creation of the universe. The absence of ontological randomness—the idea that everything has a cause or reason—leads to the question of whether there is also a reason or cause for God's existence.

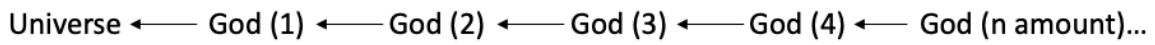
The common belief holds that God is the intelligence behind all creation, but this raises the question of the intelligence or cause behind God. The idea that nothing occurs without reason or purpose suggests that God's existence cannot be the result of ontological chance. If we assume that "cause" and "reason" imply an intelligence that initiates something with a purpose, then the existence of God would also require a cause or intelligence behind it.

This leads to the possibility that, under this criterion, God could not simply arise by chance or ontological randomness, but that His existence would be tied to another entity or intelligence that created Him. In this sense, reflecting on the cause and reason for God opens a series of questions about the nature of His existence and His relationship with any entity that might have originated Him.

In this case, the idea of infinite regression emerges, challenging the possibility of the existence of a God as the ultimate cause, since it suggests that one could always find another God in an endless sequence (as initially proposed). This raises the difficulty of establishing a solid or firm foundation for the existence of all things, as the question of who or what created each successive God could continue indefinitely, leading to an infinite regression.

This perspective questions the viability of positing a God as a necessary cause for the existence of everything, as the presence of an infinite chain of creators makes the notion of a primordial or foundational cause elusive. The search for an immutable

principle or ultimate origin for existence is challenged by the persistent question of who or what could have created the last link in the chain of deities:



The paradox emerges differently when questioning why a specific God, like God(1), created our universe instead of one of the previous Gods, such as God(2,3,4,n). The contradiction lies in the idea that Gods only arise to create other Gods, challenging the notion that everything has an intelligent cause and that fundamental existence requires the intervention of a higher entity. This perspective suggests that, under this criterion, things would not be truly fundamental, as it would create an infinite chain of creators.

The assertion that nothing is random is questioned, and the possibility of the existence of events without a specific cause or purpose is explored. The distinction between the absence of "meaningless" randomness and the existence of events driven by a concrete purpose is presented as a key point. It is suggested that some events, while appearing orchestrated, may simply be coincidences interpreted as intelligent acts.

The idea of "coincidence" is introduced as an appropriate term for improbable events that nonetheless occur. It is proposed that within the randomness of the world, some things that are highly unlikely to happen by probability alone can still occur. It is emphasized that the concept of coincidence is based on improbable events but does not necessarily imply an intelligent cause.

It is suggested that, although some may consider the world random, coincidences can be interpreted differently, either as improbable but possible events or as impossible events indicating the intervention of an intelligent entity. It is stressed that this interpretation is not necessary and that the occurrence of improbable events does not always imply an intelligent cause.

Individuals tend to interpret events as meaningful or non-random when, in reality, they are separate events that occur simultaneously or in close spatial proximity. These events are attributed with the quality of "non-randomness" due to the association that individuals assign to them, attributing a purpose or meaning conceived by an intelligent

entity. This tendency to assign meaning to events that do not inherently possess it may be due to the perception of coincidences that seem more notable or significant.

To illustrate this point, consider a random set of letters, for example, "ASELK." These letters can be associated in various ways, assigning additional meanings to them. For example, A=Á, S=R, E=B, L=O, K=L, which would transform "ASELK" into "Árbol" (the word for “tree” in spanish). Association is crucial for the generation of meaning. An individual may associate these letters with specific events based on their history of learning and experiences, generating the feeling that there is more than just a simple coincidence. However, this feeling results from the process of association, which can be triggered in response to certain occurrences and appear to indicate an intervention beyond randomness. It is important to highlight that this feeling does not necessarily reflect a purpose or intelligent entity but is the result of the probability of certain associations occurring.

At the quantum level, it's proposed that some phenomena, such as the decay of a radioactive nucleus, might lack apparent causes and be considered random events (see reference 22 in the "References" section at the end of this work). In this context, it is suggested that this type of quantum randomness differs from our usual understanding of events as being caused by others on our scale. Often, it's impossible for us to determine all the causes leading to certain current states, and this limitation is interpreted as randomness.

It is crucial to note that this "random causality" at the quantum level does not necessarily imply the existence of purpose or intelligence. The presence of causes and reasons does not equate to asserting an intrinsic purpose or the intervention of an intelligent entity in these phenomena. While the existence of causes is acknowledged, it does not automatically lead to the conclusion that there is purpose or intelligence behind these processes. Understanding causality at quantum levels presents conceptual challenges regarding how we perceive randomness and causality on different scales.

Consider the following situation: Imagine an individual standing on the top of a building, holding two containers of water, one in each hand, and they must empty one of them, causing the water to fall to the ground. This individual has complete freedom to choose which container to drop; they are fully self-determined, meaning they decide the state of the water containers in this case. They have no preference for either

container, and their dexterity (being right- or left-handed) does not influence their choice. Finally, they choose to drop the container on the left.

The act of dropping the left container produces a specific effect, different from what would have occurred if they had chosen the right one. In this scenario, the water splashes on a different person on the ground than it would have if the right container had been dropped. The splashed person is forced to return home to change their clothes, but not before looking up to see who was responsible. However, by that time, the individual would have already entered the building. The affected person files a complaint in the building, arrives late to work, shares the experience with colleagues, and, before arriving late to work, meets a friend passing by whom they hadn't seen in a long time. This friend invites them to lunch that day. In summary, a series of events unfolds, not randomly, but with an originating cause: the individual's choice to empty the left container.

However, this action lacks a specific purpose, as there was no evident reason to choose the left container. The action was ultimately arbitrary in the sense that there was no intrinsic need for it to be one container over the other, given that the individual's structure would determine one of the two states definitively. The other container could just as easily have been emptied since there was no external condition influencing the choice, at least within our hypothetical scenario. Although a series of causes leads to an event, and therefore there is causality and reasons, there is no underlying purpose or clear intent to create something. The initial factor that triggers other events in reality must, at some point, lack a cause, which precludes the existence of a reason and, consequently, a purpose according to this criterion.

Purpose can be conceived within the framework of causality, where the absence of causes implies the absence of purpose. Since, ultimately, we lack causes, there is no intrinsic purpose in things. However, as conscious beings, we can attribute purpose to our actions because these are supported by causes and goals. It is important to note that the meaning of purpose involves goals that are mental associations aiming to be realized and have future implications. This nature of purpose is inherent to conscious beings like us.

Even though our goals are supported by causes, ultimately, the reason for these goals does not reduce to the "action" in terms of other goals. One could argue that if the causes necessary for a phenomenon are extraordinarily improbable, any concrete fact

could lead to consequences unrelated to the original cause, as illustrated in the previous example. However, all events ultimately lack purpose, and what may seem incredibly significant is due to our subjective attribution under that particular characteristic.

In the case of the existence of God, who has no cause and has always existed (understanding "always" as an eternal existence), there is no substantial difference from claiming that the universe has always existed (it simply "is"). However, introducing the idea of God unnecessarily multiplies the hypothesis, as it adds an irrelevant factor to the reason for the universe. If we assert that the universe has "always" existed, without a causal origin, we are indicating that it had no external cause and did not emerge from nothing as an arbitrary ontological event. The notion of "always" in this context could refer to discrete changes in the states of things, which simply exist without a cause that generated them. This change itself has no cause and reflects the intrinsic nature of reality. Since, according to previous arguments, states do not act as causes for other states, there would be no contradiction regarding previous states of matter in terms of infinite causes. In this context, change simply "is"; it neither emerges nor is configured, as in the absence of anything, even a change of state, the way states manifest would be intrinsically tied to the very nature of matter.

Reflecting on the nature of time raises questions about how structural material causes manifest in different states. Even in the scenario where time is considered caused by something, the need arises to postulate the existence of something ultimately uncaused. From my perspective, every state that comes into being requires a change of state, with the change of state itself being time. Thus, time would be something intrinsic, something that simply exists; any cause, in order to come into being, needs to manifest through a change of state.

Imagining a primitive, static reality without any change of state or time, where changes in state begin to occur, is indeed challenging. In the absence of reasons or causes for this to happen, it raises the question of whether a reason or cause is necessary for something to occur, implying a change of state where it manifests. In this sense, the idea of a reality without causes, where time simply "is," presents itself as a possibility.

Ockham's razor advocates for not unnecessarily multiplying hypotheses (see reference 23 in the "References" section at the end of this work). In this context, the simplest explanation, and therefore the most probable, would be to assert that the universe has "always" existed, without the need for a God. Although the universe is

complex, it is argued that it is simpler to postulate an eternal universe than an eternal God, which would require an additional explanation regarding its origin.

The need for God as an explanation diminishes depending on one's concept of Him. Generally speaking, the notion of God as the first cause of everything and His role in arranging the physical laws could be interpreted as an ad hoc solution to justify His existence, especially in contrast to scientific discoveries.

Genuine truth is not confined to a specific field of knowledge; it emerges as a faithful reflection of reality in terms of entities and their relationships, as expressed earlier, following the established criterion. In this sense, truth cannot be attributed to a religious, mystical, scientific, or philosophical truth; there is only one truth that stems from the single existing reality.

Truth is identified with reality, according to a particular conception of the latter. The absoluteness and immutability of truth depend on the permanence and absoluteness of reality. This raises the fundamental question: Is reality permanent and immutable, either in whole or in part? If reality changes, if it is unstable, then there would be no immutable truths about the nature of reality, except for the truth inherent in change itself. In this case, change would be the only absolute truth, unless it stops at some point. However, if the fundamental structure of reality simply "is" and cannot change in the sense that there is no cause beyond that structure to trigger structural change, then truth would be limited to the form and implications of that structure. Reality would lack the property of changing its form or structure, thus establishing an absolute—a truth that represents the limit.

The concept of a God existing beyond reality presents a problem, as we cannot escape reality, and for God to be considered as such, He must be part of it. A God existing beyond the boundaries of reality would simply not exist and could not be known. Any plausible consideration of God, when subjected to inquiry, refers to an existing God, understood as a material entity and part of reality. However, knowledge of the nature of this material entity may be unattainable.

The existence of unknown material entities or entities that might lie beyond our universe is plausible, but they cannot exist beyond what exists, as there is no "beyond" to reality; any substance unknown in its nature can be part of what exists, but it cannot exist outside of it.

The idea is raised that in a universe without a purpose given by an intelligent entity, the complexity and order we observe could not be achieved. However, this argument is not conclusive, as what we consider complex is merely the way things manifest in reality. The notion of perfection or design in a universe also depends on the definition we assign to these concepts, and such definitions are arbitrary and subjective. The idea of what is perfect or designed varies according to the criteria of the individual defining it, and although the content of this criterion may be correct or incorrect, it ultimately refers to associations with reality and represents relationships within it. The attribution of perfection or design is therefore relative and open to interpretation.

We call "order" the patterns that things in reality manifest, such as certain behaviors or specific configurations. This order exists in reality, but the criteria for defining it reside within us, not in external reality. The assertion that the universe is orderly, in the sense that it presents discernible patterns, does not necessarily imply the existence of a God or an intelligence that created that order.

Consider the movement of a sphere on an inclined plane compared to the lack of movement of a cube under specific conditions. The movement pattern of the sphere depends on its shape and structure, as well as other external conditions such as the inclined plane and gravitational force. By understanding the form of objects and their relationship to the environment, we can determine why the sphere moves while the cube does not. Patterns or order, in this sense, depend on the inherent structures of objects, on how things are. Since, according to initial propositions, things do not have an ultimate cause, the resulting order derives from the intrinsic nature of things, and there is no need to postulate the existence of a God to explain that order.

The argument that the universe appears perfect or designed lacks strength. If the conditions were different but still allowed our existence, we would classify that new order as complex because we associate complexity with our existence. Ultimately, our perception of what is complex, perfect, or designed is conditioned by our existence and experiences, which makes the argument of design or perfection in the universe subjective and relative.

The assertion that things are "fine-tuned" for life can be seen as a biased choice of words favoring a particular explanation. The idea of fine-tuning suggests purpose or design, but it is crucial to recognize that everything might be the result of natural processes, not necessarily directed towards a specific end. The same notion of design

applies to living beings, but the theory of evolution shows how adaptation to the environment has shaped organisms over time.

As I have previously established, there are no ultimate purposes; any conception of a purpose reduces to a dynamic of consequences, where what is called a "purpose" is simply a consequence of something prior. Even if there were a God who conceived that certain matter should take a particular form to give rise to life, that conception would have no ultimate reason for being, just as life itself does not. Life must be compatible with the inherent dynamics of consequences in reality, but there is no ultimate reason that dictates life must exist.

The nature of God, if He exists, would be determined by His structure and nature, and any change in God would be a consequence of that structure. Even if a God created reality, things ultimately cannot be one way or another; life is simply part of how reality is, without the need for an ultimate purpose to determine it.

The idea that events must unfold in a specific way to give rise to complexity in the universe is based on the notion of causality and reason, often associated with the intelligence that originates purpose, as in the case of God. However, phenomena do not need reasons provided by an intelligent being for reality to achieve what we call complexity; complexity can emerge from natural processes and dynamics of interaction without requiring an external purpose.

The position of the Earth relative to the Sun, allowing the existence of a habitat suitable for complex organisms, can be interpreted in various ways. Under a certain criterion, one might argue that this arrangement is not random and has a reason for being, which is attributed to God. However, given the vastness of the universe and the number of stars, even if the probability of planets being located in positions similar to Earth’s is low, the sheer number of planets in the universe suggests that this configuration is not unique. Therefore, the position of Earth does not necessarily imply that a God arranged it this way with the purpose of fostering intelligent life.

Coincidences, in this context, should not be automatically interpreted as evidence of the existence of an intelligent being, but rather as manifestations of probabilities in a vast and diverse universe. The idea is to avoid unnecessarily multiplying hypotheses and instead seek explanations based on probabilities.

However, one might consider the possibility of viewing God as equivalent to reality, with the characteristic of being intelligent and capable of acting to engender a purpose. From this perspective, God could be conceived as the entirety of the universe, including the configuration of things that allow for complexity. This view suggests that reality itself is a manifestation of God, with intelligence always present in phenomena. It is an interpretation that fuses the notion of God with the very nature and structure of the universe.

It is common for people to associate certain processes, such as intelligence, with living organisms. However, it is also common to think of abstractions and individual creations, such as concepts of "good" or "beautiful," as elements intrinsic to reality itself, rather than as associations limited to our minds.

The idea is raised that the complexity of the universe demonstrates an intelligent process, though different from what is generally understood by intelligence. The question that arises is to what extent we could attribute the adjective "intelligent" to natural phenomena. Can the actions of nature have an intelligent intention beyond consciousness?

This consideration is often affected by confusions generated by definitions and criteria. The notion of complexity is associated with the existence of human beings, suggesting the idea that if we exist, there must be a purpose. However, from the definition of complexity, it does not necessarily follow that there is a purpose as an intelligent cause for life in general.

Arguing about the order or the "wonders" of the universe is not a strong argument. The so-called order depends on the structures of objects and the shape of things. As established in the initial propositions, things would not have an ultimate cause, and order results from the way things are, without the need for a God to determine that order. The physical laws we observe may arise from the primordial form of existence without requiring the intervention of a God in the conventional sense.

Considering reality itself as an intelligent being implies attributing an intelligent reason to natural phenomena. However, saying that a phenomenon occurs in a certain way because it is how the intelligent being acts makes no more sense than saying that the phenomenon occurs that way due to reality itself. The complexity that might arise does not necessarily imply intelligence.

The notion of complexity or "order" depends on the criteria one establishes. If the universe were different, the patterns we observe would still be a particular "order." The existence of order does not necessarily imply the existence of a God.

The question of how intelligence might be contained within reality could be posed. If we consider that order has existed since the beginning of the universe, then intelligence might underlie even the most fundamental elements, including fundamental particles. However, equating these particles with intelligence is difficult to conceptualize and differs from the traditional idea of God as a separate and intelligent entity.

Intelligence, according to human criteria, is attributed to specific organizations of matter in complex organisms. Although there is no single criterion for defining intelligence, it is generally associated with self-awareness and is limited to certain organisms. The lack of a universal criterion makes it difficult to determine what is considered intelligent and what is not, especially in relation to other organisms in the cosmos.

Ultimately, the idea of cosmic or divine intelligence is subject to individual interpretations and criteria, and understanding intelligence in the context of reality as a whole is challenging due to the lack of a single, clear criterion for defining intelligence.

The notion of self-awareness, understood as the perception of one's own existence, can be grasped with relative clarity and consensus, suggesting a general agreement around its meaning. In contrast, the definition of intelligence proves to be a more difficult task, characterized by the absence of a universally accepted criterion.

Intelligence is commonly conceptualized as an intrinsic component of adaptation to the environment, with its manifestation being crucial for survival, particularly from an evolutionary perspective. This adaptation is interpreted as the ability to solve problems, where the capacity to address complex issues is directly associated with a higher degree of intelligence. However, there is a range of skills that reflect the aptitude for acquiring and applying knowledge effectively. Another perspective suggests that the complexity of problems is not constant; rather, it varies depending on the intrinsic complexity of the minds, implying that solving a problem may be more or less accessible depending on the inherent mental complexity.

Under the previous paradigm, intelligence, rooted in evolutionary theory, could be conceived through another criterion. Here, it is proposed that intelligence, in its adaptive essence, specifically manifests through the execution of complex behaviors, with complexity measured by the number of variables involved. As behaviors become more intricate, it is argued that a higher intelligence is revealed, anchored in an advanced biological capacity for processing information. This approach emphasizes the importance of how organisms manipulate the knowledge acquired through experience, leading to more complex behaviors and adaptive advantages. Furthermore, it suggests that the complexity of information processing and the expression of complex behaviors are two complementary facets of the same entity, especially when considering organisms within the same species.

Human intelligence, in my view, is not primarily defined by the specific contents, ideas, or modes of thought that an individual possesses, but by the capacity to contain and process such contents. Although certain approaches to thinking may be considered more accurate or advantageous according to certain criteria, I maintain that intelligence is inherently a continuum in terms of behavioral complexity.

It is plausible to argue that intelligence manifests in the flexibility of individuals to adopt modes of thinking consistent with the pursuit of genuine knowledge. However, I doubt that this correlation is a rigid rule. In this sense, intelligence becomes a continuum, where all living organisms exhibit some degree of intelligence, although it varies in complexity. Intelligence, then, is directly related to the complexity of behavior and information processing, which may be more or less intricate according to my criteria.

In relation to my proposal on the association of concepts and the manifestation of the property of meaning in the mind, I suggest that "intelligence" as a concept does not have a tangible existence outside our mind. What we consider real are the associations of concepts that the term intelligence encompasses. The human brain, by functioning in a certain way, generates specific behaviors that are labeled as intelligent, and these behaviors are a representation of the conceptual associations linked to the term.

Is it plausible to speak of a continuum in the context of intelligence? In my opinion, the complexity of functioning and behaviors that an organism exhibits constitutes what we commonly refer to as greater or lesser intelligence. However, it is crucial to recognize that even the least complex organism displays some type of functioning and

behaviors in its interaction with the environment. The notion of greater or lesser complexity, in this context, seems to reflect a quantitative value, where complexity is defined by the number of entities or specifications necessary to describe the functioning and behavior in question.

When we approach the notion of an intelligent being that encompasses everything, like God, the application of the criterion of intelligence in its entirety becomes complex, especially concerning its constitution. If we consider intelligence in terms of complexity, the question arises whether this intelligent entity would be subject to an evolutionary process unless it is argued that its complexity is inherent and not the result of evolutionary development.

If we posit that God is responsible for the creation of everything and the design of all things, then we could assert that this intelligence possesses significant complexity. Intelligence, as we know it, arises in the context of natural selection and the evolution of organisms with a specific organization of matter. In this sense, we might contemplate God as a living entity, though of a different nature than the living organisms we know. However, it is crucial to recognize the limitations of transferring our concrete knowledge of intelligence to any situation, especially when it comes to entities like God, whose nature might surpass our understanding.

The conception of God, in this context, raises the possibility of a form of life different from what we know, or it might even represent something other than life as we understand it, yet with the ability to manifest intelligence in a way that could be similar to or completely different from what we know. Ultimately, understanding intelligence in the divine context faces the inherent complexity of conceptualizing an entity that is beyond the limits of our conventional experience and comprehension.

The question of whether self-awareness could be an intrinsic entity to the universe as a whole, represented by God, rather than any particular consciousness like our own, poses a significant conceptual challenge. If we consider that the universe is composed exclusively of matter and energy, rejecting the idea of an immaterial God, the possibility arises that this entity encompasses everything that exists and is aware of it at all times, according to the criterion of omniscience.

The fundamental question lies in whether intelligence and self-awareness necessarily require a system similar to that of living organisms to manifest. Is it possible

for intelligence and consciousness to exist in other contexts, which could be considered a different form of life? Artificial intelligence, for example, raises the possibility of structures that exhibit intelligent characteristics without adhering to the fundamental properties of known living organisms.

The inquiry extends to considering whether intelligent and conscious entities could exist in forms radically different from what we understand as life. Could a cloud of gas and dust, for instance, possess intelligence? While there is no intrinsic reason to dismiss such a possibility, the likelihood of finding a conscious entity within structures that significantly differ from life as we know it raises questions about the very nature of consciousness and intelligence.

Exploring the diversity of life and consciousness in the universe leads us to question the extent to which our minds can imagine beings different from ourselves. The possibility of an entity like God, on the level of known matter, challenges the limits of our understanding and raises profound questions about the nature of reality and existence. Ultimately, these reflections invite us to consider the vastness of possibilities within the universe and to explore the complexity of concepts such as intelligence, self-awareness, and life as a whole.

The idea that God is an integral part of everything, determining the factors that affect reality and the evolution of living beings, suggests the notion of an intelligent entity that acts as the fundamental cause of all things. From this perspective, it is argued that divine intervention manifests through intelligence as the causal force. However, the question arises of how this intelligent entity affects reality and us, considering the possibility that its existence does not originate us but that we simply form part of its manifestation—an intelligent reality.

The integration of God with evolution is proposed by arguing that the creation of humanity and all species on Earth occurred through the evolutionary process. Although this approach differs from the traditional concept of divine creation, it suggests that our existence is a manifestation of the divine entity, relating to it equivalently within the intelligent reality.

However, when considering the mechanism of natural selection, a challenge arises, as this process does not require an intelligent designer. This brings into question the

possibility that God might affect reality at a fundamental level, especially when examining previous claims about the nature of God and existence.

The notion of divine intervention suggests a purpose in evolution, but at the same time, any element at play in this process would be part of the divine entity according to the established criteria. This raises the question of whether this entity originated at a specific moment in the history of our universe and if it has undergone changes as the universe evolves. The possibility that this intelligent being emerged at the dawn of our universe, distinguishing between our universe and reality itself, poses fundamental questions about the nature and origin of God in relation to the universe we know.

Considering the entity or God from this perspective implies that its place in this world depends on viewing each element of the universe not as separate entities but as interconnected in some way with the rest of the elements, for this entity to exist. Some suggest that everything is interconnected, and certain individuals interpret this through Bell's theorem, among other approaches (see reference 24 in the "References" section at the end of this work for more information on Bell's theorem).

The idea that everything is connected has been interpreted in various ways, sometimes to support different beliefs, with many attributing varied meanings to this connection without necessarily proving the implications they ascribe to it.

The existence of intelligence is revisited when observing the current complexity of the universe and how things are the way they are. However, it is emphasized that this observation does not constitute proof of the existence of intelligence. The notion of order and complexity depends on our conception of what we consider as such, based on our observations. There is no intrinsic need to postulate the existence of an intelligent entity, like God, simply because we exist or because we observe order.

From the perspective of the proposed entity, intelligence is inferred from the ability of the fundamental elements of the universe, separate from each other, to form complex and purposeful structures. This raises the question of why the foundations of life, such as metabolism with certain enzymes, arose if not to sustain the DNA structure that gave rise to more complex life forms (see reference 25 in the "References" section for more information on this aspect).

However, it is argued that there is no intrinsic purpose in the sense that one thing arises because something preceding it enabled it. The possibility of life emerged due to

existing conditions, not because there was a preordained purpose. The idea that the universe exists in such a way as to allow our existence is inverted, pointing out that we exist as a consequence of these conditions, not as a predetermined end.

The comparison between the cells of an organism and individuals within an intelligent universe suggests the possibility that, just as cells are part of an organism, we might be interconnected entities within an intelligent whole. This perspective implies that events and phenomena are not mere coincidences but rather outcomes of the functioning of an intelligent entity, in this case, God.

However, the validity of this idea is questioned when we observe human behavior and the lack of evidence supporting the notion that we act according to an intelligence that encompasses us. Although the metaphor of being cells within an intelligent organism may be intriguing, reality seems to indicate that we are independent and autonomous entities, connected to others but not directly governed by a global intelligence.

The analogy of considering society as an organism with its own intelligence also faces criticism, as society is more appropriately understood as a collection of individuals and their interactions, not as a single organism with distinct behaviors and desires. Accepting the idea of a global intelligence that encompasses society or individuals without solid evidence and rational argumentation is seen as irrational and dangerous, as it implies accepting influences in private life without firm foundations.

Furthermore, the existence of relationships between individuals or between individuals and their environment does not necessarily imply the presence of an overarching intelligence that guides and directs the parts. The possibility that an entity could produce changes in one does not automatically mean that we cease to be autonomous and independent beings in our decision-making and in the shaping of our values and desires.

The perspective of being part of a global intelligence raises the possibility of freedom within the connection to this entity, as, according to this view, we would consider ourselves free by being part of that intelligence that determines things from the beginning. This conception differs from other notions that view God as the creator of the universe, as it posits that God is the universe and everything within it, as an intelligent being independent of other intelligences like our own.

When considering the possibility of multiple universes, questions arise about the nature of God in that context. Would God exist in those other universes, and would He be identical to the God of our universe? Would we be connected in some way to those other universes?

Theories exploring reality and the model of our universe include the idea that there could be a multitude of universes, each with its own characteristics. When contemplating a multidimensional space that houses a variety of universes, the question of how everything originated comes to the forefront. It is argued that reality itself had no singular beginning and will have no end but simply *is.* It has always existed on a primordial level without a specific cause.

Energy-matter and multidimensional space-time could have always existed as reality itself, while our universe originated at a certain point, as suggested by the Big Bang. In this context, the question arises whether God is subject to the forces that shape phenomena and the emergence of entire universes. If God is matter and energy, then perhaps God has always existed without an external cause.

The intervention of this entity in the world also becomes an intriguing issue. To what extent can God intervene in phenomena and the emergence of universes? These questions explore conceptual boundaries and philosophical challenges related to the nature of reality and the existence of a divine entity.

The idea that energy and matter are equivalent to God, a self-aware entity that affects reality and imposes order, introduces the notion of a "harmonious" universe that allows life to exist in privileged places. It is suggested that this harmony and order cannot be the result of randomness, as randomness would only yield disorder.

However, a crucial question arises: why couldn't it be random? Why would this entity favor life and impose order on the universe? To delve deeper into this question, it is necessary to explore the purpose of God, if one exists, and whether this purpose implies a greater meaning external to the entity itself. Moreover, it raises the question of whether God can truly provide us with meaning in our lives.

The idea that God could be limited suggests that a higher "transcendence" would not be achieved with this entity or any similar one. It is argued that, according to the established criteria, if nothing existed in the universe, the entity would have no place in this world, and vice versa. However, it is acknowledged that matter and fundamental

particles preceded life, raising the possibility that this energy and matter might be the first conscious entity that emerged with the formation of the universe.

Even if the general associations with the concept of God are considered valid, it is suggested that there is still room for "chance" as an ontological element, since no other intelligence originated this entity—unless one considers another God. It is noted that the lack of an external cause for God's actions could make everything originating from Him arbitrary, without a concrete purpose, and thus everything would be a consequence rather than an end or a means to something that gives meaning to our lives.

It is plausible to propose that the genesis of God might be linked to the formation of the universe or, alternatively, to the acquisition of complexity and intelligence by energy and matter before the emergence of our cosmos. If our universe is just one among many, each with its own probability of harboring life, the existence of life in our universe could be attributed to the presence of this intelligent being, given that the likelihood of its emergence was significant in our cosmic context. In this scenario, the entity responsible for eliminating chance could have emerged fortuitously, meaning not as a result of a purpose conferred by another intelligent entity, but as a contingency, although not necessarily with an intrinsic purpose in reality.

Considering the hypothesis of multiple universes or the possibility that our universe is unique, the genesis of God could be associated with the beginning of our universe as a latent possibility. If matter and energy have existed eternally without a cause, God would also have existed perpetually and, at some point, might have catalyzed the emergence of our universe.

In the scenario where God lacks the ability to trigger this process, His existence would not be tied to it, thus presenting the vision of a limited God who may have never intervened. Considering the other possibility, where our universe is part of a multidimensional space with other universes, and the entity encompasses all of them due to the fundamental similarity between matter and energy within them, God might not have been created at all—He simply is. The entity could have existed eternally in terms of an organized whole, or the organization could have emerged later as matter and energy interacted with each other. If the entity has always maintained its nature, it is plausible that our universe was intentionally created, although the presence of an ultimate purpose remains subject to questioning, as will be explored in subsequent propositions.

If the entity and the fundamental matter of all universes exist without having been created and are simply part of this multidimensional space, even before our universe and others emerged, then the notion of a purpose in our existence lacks foundation. In an intentional creation, some sense or purpose could be attributed, at least in certain stages of existence, given that ultimately there are no causes. One might argue that there is a reason, but if matter simply exists and has always existed, then the question of why we are here and what our purpose is becomes irrelevant. Furthermore, the eternity of God does not necessarily guarantee His ability to originate our universe.

It could be suggested that our own sense of purpose lies in the individual construction of meaning, rather than seeking a pre-existing one that we never had. However, even this self-attribution of purpose could lack ultimate significance, as something independent in reality.

The options presented are as follows: First, the existence of a single universe—ours—where God arises during its formation and later organizes to influence its "evolution." In this scenario, both the universe and God emerge as possibilities, with determinism but without intrinsic purpose. In this context, the presence or absence of ontological chance does not alter the lack of purpose. This God would be subject to limitations in His origin, and it would be unlikely that He fundamentally intervened in the evolution of the universe, as the presence of causes affects this entity even now.

Second, the possibility of a God who acts in a "self-determined" way (in terms of ontological chance), acting spontaneously without discernible causes. In this case, the absence of purpose is intrinsic, as spontaneity does not imply will or purpose according to conventional understanding. Although He might determine certain things, this determination would be arbitrary, like an ontological chance. However, if things are considered to have causes, they would not ultimately depend on this God, and He would not truly "determine" events. In this scenario, the context of God would shape everything that follows, as long as the determinants are considered external to God.

Third, the existence of multiple universes is considered, with ours being one of them, all confined to a greater reality—the ultimate universe that contains everything. In this context, two possibilities arise: the first implies that God was not created; He simply exists, without infinite regression, organizing at a particular moment and triggering the creation of the universes, including ours. The second alternative suggests that the entity has "always" existed, without organizing at a particular moment, and later

gave rise to the creation of our universe and others. It is essential to note that all these considerations are merely possibilities being proposed.

The question of whether the entity has limitations or intervenes is a subject of debate. This raises the question of whether God can comprehend Himself. The nature of His knowledge suggests the need for a specific mechanism, similar to how our neurons activate when we think or perceive. However, can we infer, through the same mechanism, how we understand the nature of that mechanism? Introspection doesn't allow us to know the neural activity underlying our thoughts. Similarly, how can God, through His knowledge, account for the way He knows? It seems that this is not possible without encountering limitations, which would contradict His omnipotence and omniscience. There must be something external or part of Himself, uncontrollable, that activated the initial cause of this knowledge, representing a form of limitation.

Moreover, as mentioned earlier, God would not have self-awareness if He is all that exists. Even if He possessed this characteristic, He could not fundamentally influence the universe to be one way rather than another, since everything would simply be the manifestation of His own form, from which He could not escape.

For God to meet the criteria usually proposed, He would have to be beyond all logic, beyond the limits of existence, which presents a paradox and questions His effective existence.

The idea that God may have acted, even if only at a specific point, such as the beginning of the universe, raises the question of whether He is subject to the same determinism that governs other entities, including human beings. Could God truly intervene in the course of events?

It could be argued that God is the determining factor of all things. Although things are determined, this does not necessarily mean that they are directed toward a specific purpose, such as a "harmonious" universe with intelligent life. However, for this to be possible, things must be determined with an end in mind, and this end could be attributed to something that gives them that purpose, namely God or an intelligent entity. In this scenario, we as individuals would move subject to the force of determination, without the ability to escape it. However, the entity as a whole could be considered not subject to this force, which would open the possibility of freedom to the extent that we consider ourselves part of that whole. This is where the notion of the

"transcendental" represented by God arises, and with it, the possibility of freedom. However, this argument falls apart when considering that God would not escape causality in His actions and, as an entity with a defined form, would have no choice, since everything would simply be a manifestation of His essence.

The question of whether this transcendence is simply a product of our imagination is a valid one. Can a person who believes in something transcendent, like God, conceive of a world that arose purely by "chance," in the sense of randomness, without the intervention of an intelligent entity? Can someone forgo the belief in a higher intelligence that designed everything? The dichotomy between perceiving certain events as coincidences or as something beyond mere chance raises the question of whether this transcendental entity truly allows for a harmonious universe, especially when we consider the presence of wars, deaths, catastrophes, and the constant destruction of solar systems, many of which could harbor life. Can a universe with such a diversity of occurrences really be called harmonious?

The perception of harmony in reality is subjective and depends on the criteria we apply. What we consider harmonious might be a subjective construct based on our experiences and values. From this perspective, the notion of harmony may not be inherent to reality itself.

The idea of an intelligent designer behind life is understandable, especially when considering the complexity and diversity of living organisms. However, the vastness of time in the universe offers a different perspective. Over billions of years, even highly improbable events can occur. Evolution, through processes like natural selection, has been the vehicle for the emergence of new species, including humans. While the probability of certain events might seem low, the immensity of time allows even the improbable to happen.

Admiration for the "wonders" of nature and the perception of perfection can lead to the idea that there must be something more behind it all. However, the need for an intelligent designer as a prerequisite for the observed diversity is not necessarily supported by science. The evolution of species through natural selection provides an explanation without requiring the intervention of an entity external to the process. It is crucial to recognize that perceived perfection may be a subjective interpretation based on our own standards and may not necessarily reflect objective reality.

One might equate God with nature or reality itself; if we limit ourselves to conceiving this concept exclusively, then it is so, as we cannot deny the very existence of reality, making God an inevitable case. However, this concept of God, understood as an association of elements of the term, differs from the notion of a conscious and intentional God. Nature, in its essence, lacks intentions, consciousness, or intelligence; it cannot be attributed the characteristic of being intelligent, as in nature, things are consequences, not means destined for an ultimate end.

Time plays a crucial role in the great diversity of organisms, and this temporal dimension manifests abundantly in every moment when we observe living beings. However, considering that evolution occurs in small steps over time, an immense temporal period is not necessary to support the existence of mutations and changes that arise naturally, without external interventions. It is important to emphasize that small changes are much more likely than substantial changes at any single moment in time. While a significant temporal extension is not required to explain how these small changes culminate in the organisms we observe, a considerable time interval is essential to understand how such minimal modifications translate into the variety of organisms that exist.

Experiments have shown that when the elements present on Earth millions of years ago, before the emergence of life, are exposed to electrical discharges similar to those produced in that distant past due to specific climatic conditions, more complex molecules are formed—the very building blocks of life (see reference 27 in the "References" section at the end of this essay for detailed information on this topic). However, this raises the question of why these reactions lead to the formation of these particular compounds, why they manifest in this specific way, and what aspect of natural laws dictates this configuration. Could this be evidence of a designer? As mentioned earlier, the mere existence of life does not necessarily imply the existence of God. We do not have the grounds to assert such a connection, as we cannot claim with certainty that the presence of life and human existence are irrefutable evidence of a divine being.

It is plausible to consider that the connection between events in our determined world is not simply the result of "chance" (understood as contingency within a defined context), but the absence of chance does not necessarily imply the existence of an intelligent designer. The notion of multiple universes, where physical laws differ and do

not allow for the existence of life, suggests that our universe is one of the few where life can emerge. In this sense, the possibility of a designer can be dismissed, but we can still reflect on the harmonious interconnection between matter and nature, creating a unity that could harbor traces of intelligence and consciousness, beyond the intelligence and consciousness that its constituent elements, such as animals, plants, and other parts of an ecosystem, might possess.

The idea that matter and nature are interconnected in an intelligent way, giving rise to an entity that encompasses everything, could be considered a possible definition of God. This is proposed based on the connection between things, forming an intelligence that encompasses all, offering a perspective on the intelligence inherent in nature. However, the unknown connection between all things does not necessarily imply the existence of a global intelligence that comprehends everything. Additionally, arguing that the existence of order in the universe is evidence of God's existence is insufficient. The concept of "order" is subjective and depends on our interpretation of patterns and configurations in reality. Patterns, often referred to as "order," are inherent to the structures of objects and the form of things. In this context, according to my initial arguments, lacking a final cause, order depends on the intrinsic nature of things, eliminating the need for a God to determine that order.

The term "order" refers to the laws of nature, which define the behavior of the elements that make up reality. The central question is whether God, in this conceptual form, can or has effectively intervened in these laws. When considering ecosystems, each component contributes to the maintenance of the whole without an explicit awareness of this interaction. In an ecosystem devoid of human presence, the observed harmony does not imply a separate consciousness or intelligence governing the entire system. The harmonious organization arises from natural evolution, where elements utilize available resources to develop and allow for the emergence of more complex forms.

The notion of a global consciousness or intelligence within nature seems improbable, as consciousness and intelligence manifest as the result of the more advanced organization of matter in specific organisms, not as an entity encompassing an entire set of organisms. In this sense, "nature is not wise" in the sense that there is no overseeing consciousness maintaining harmony in the ecosystem with a specific

purpose. What is perceived as harmony in ecosystems develops naturally, without the need for a global intelligence.

An analogy is drawn between a human organism and its intelligence as a representation of this conceptualized God with intelligence, where human cells are analogous to the fundamental elements of matter that constitute God. Although these cells may lack awareness of each other, they are part of an intelligent whole, forming the entirety in a manner similar to our cells. In this case, God depends on the constituent elements and their organization, that is, on an evolving process, and would not be the omnipotent creator of everything. Additionally, intelligence appears as a recent attribute, emerging at higher levels of material complexity and not in elementary particles, for example.

We share a fundamental similarity with the rest of the entities in the universe, as we are composed of the same elements found in the stars and have emerged from similar processes. By obeying the same fundamental laws, our world exhibits an order that manifests on a specific scale, even considering the possibility of quantum indeterminism, though without recognizing ontological randomness in structural terms, where the form of existence determines the behavior of matter at the level of its fundamental elements.

Determination within a universe governed by causality rules out the possibility that an intelligent and conscious entity, belonging to that universe, could have originated entities, orders, or patterns in an absolute sense. In this context, God does not possess omnipotence that allows for the creation of anything, as His nature, His structure, establishes limits and determines possibilities. Both structural causes and a measure of randomness influence the configuration of things.

An intelligent being would be limited by its determinants and would lack the capacity to act beyond them. It would not have absolute power to influence, and more crucially, it would be constrained to act in accordance with its own determined nature. Only a being that is separate from and not subject to determinism could have originated the events in our world, establishing an order based on its own will, independent of the deterministic limitations that govern the universe.

The question of the temporal existence of a divine being presents an intriguing dilemma. To suppose that this being "always" existed, without a cause that brought it

into existence, raises the question of its activity before the creation of the universe. However, approaching this question from a temporal perspective introduces a paradox, since time itself might merely be a manifestation of changes in state, according to my view. To ask whether God created time is contradictory and suggests a limitation in God's omnipotent power.

One alternative is to consider that something simply "is," existing without being created ex nihilo, serving as the foundation for everything else. This concept could be associated with the notion of God, constrained by the nature of its existence. Or, more simply, it could be posited that the universe, in some unknown primordial state, has always existed—both the matter embedded in a spatial dimension and the change of state, or time.

Denying this premise, the absence of causality or purpose, might lead to the need to posit the existence of another God or entity that created the first, provoking an infinite regression. However, this line of reasoning encounters difficulties, as it raises the question of who created that other God, generating an infinite regression without resolution.

Before addressing such issues, it is crucial to consider the very nature of reality. If the material structural cause requires a change of state to come into being, and the change of state implies the existence of time, then any being, including God, would require time to bring about such a change of state. This introduces fundamental limits and highlights the inherent complexity in the notion of an omnipotent being in the creation of the universe.

The viability of an intelligent being and designer of things, conceived as a physical and material entity, according to the established criteria, implies that it might have specifically determined the necessary physical constants and laws. According to this approach, once these laws were established, this being would not need to intervene further, as the physical laws themselves would provide the foundation for the universe we observe today.

However, self-determination in the sense of originating its own nature reveals itself as impossible. This is because self-determination without prior determinism implies the absence of causes, and, according to the principle of causality, there must have been an initial cause. The presence of causes invalidates the possibility of intentionality in the

formation of specific physical constants, as causes act as constraints on any entity's ability to determine a universe according to its design. This is especially true if we consider this entity as an active agent and not merely as a form.

The other option presented is ontological chance, at least in a certain sense. If this ontological chance were the foundation of God's intention to create things, creation would be arbitrary, and there would ultimately be no underlying purpose in the existence of things. In this scenario, reality would simply be what it is, with no reason beyond its own nature to explain why it is that way.

Reality itself and its fundamental laws are the starting point. If we consider the hypothesis of God as an active entity, His actions would imply certain laws governing His behavior. However, these laws must precede God, as any entity, including God, would require a set of laws to explain its own functioning. It is illogical to think that God could determine Himself before establishing the laws that govern how He operates. Therefore, if we consider God to be equivalent to nature and things, the idea that God could originate the physical laws that explain Him becomes contradictory.

If the very nature of reality had an opposing logic, existence would not be possible. However, in this argument, it is suggested that this is how God could be the ultimate cause of our universe's existence, with a defined and tailored purpose. The apparent contradiction lies in the assertion that, under certain assumptions, physical laws precede God, while also maintaining that God is the ultimate cause of the universe's existence. This paradox highlights the complexity of conceptualizing God as an active agent in the creation of the universe.

The argument for a need for causes for every event leads to the possibility of an infinite regression. Every cause requires a prior cause, creating an endless cycle. One could argue that at the most fundamental level of things, there is no first cause, and therefore God would not need a cause, which would free Him to determine things without restrictions. However, this perspective presents challenges.

Although there is a point where there are no causes, we cannot necessarily claim that this point is synonymous with God, as the concept of God, according to established criteria, implies attributes beyond simply the absence of cause. A God without causes appears more complex than a universe without causes. If we consider that the universe is a space containing multiple universes, and that ultimate reality is the "breeding

ground" for universes, the idea arises that this space must randomly provide a range of possibilities, some of which give rise to universes with living beings.

This space, the reality prior to the Big Bang, is the only point where causality does not manifest, where existence lacks a prior cause, and this could be compared to the notion of God. However, in the case of a God as the primordial form, there arises an impossibility of self-explanation, as He could neither argue nor explain Himself. In this scenario, everything would merely be a manifestation of His form, with no possibility of generating a specific, tailored universe, as that would imply actions requiring causes and would limit the freedom of determination.

If it is proposed that God has an infinite regression of preceding gods, the problem would not be resolved. Existence would still depend on prior causes, and the difficulty of explaining the ultimate purpose or meaning of things would persist. The idea of an infinite regression of gods does not solve the need for an ultimate cause and therefore does not provide a satisfactory explanation for existence and purpose in the end.

The idea that both God and reality itself had no beginning at the fundamental level, that they have "always" existed in their current form, is a possibility worth considering. This implies the notion of an ultimate reality of the universe that has always been as it is, without a defined origin. This simple explanation can apply both to reality itself and to a God that might exist.

The alternative to this idea of a beginning without a clear start could be a "subsequent" principle of causality, that is, an action that follows the form or manifestation of a causal principle rather than an intrinsic determinism of its own nature. Another option could be ontological chance, something spontaneous yet conditioned by the very nature of reality. In the case of a God, this could imply arbitrary action.

Following the precepts of Occam's razor, which advocates simplicity in explanations, one could argue against the hypothesis of a God. This is somewhat reinforced by the natural explanations found for many phenomena in the universe. If there are natural explanations for other aspects of the universe, why shouldn’t the reason for the existence of the universe itself also obey natural causes rather than resorting to the hypothesis of a God?

The discussion about causes and determinism implies acknowledging that, except at the level of ultimate reality, things generally have a cause and are determined. However, it is noted that there are cases where there are no determining causes, such as in the decay of a radioactive nucleus or the emission of a photon during a transition to a lower energy level in an atom. Although the possibility of interpreting these events as cases without determining causes is raised, it is mentioned that it is not considered ontological chance in a structural sense, as a structure depends on its parts.

The question of possible randomness in the state change of a structure is posed, recognizing that any randomness would be part of the way reality is. However, it is emphasized that this randomness, even at the quantum level, would be within certain limits, and at a larger scale, we would have certainties.

In the context of the universe's formation with the presence of a God who cannot act in this regard, the position of a universe without cause at this level is established. If there is a cause at this level, there is no indication that it is attributable to a God; rather, it suggests an association with what occurs at the quantum level. Additionally, the issue of a God who cannot determine Himself without escaping the logical structure of reality is raised, adding another layer of complexity to the consideration of a divine being in relation to the creation of the universe.

If it's argued that certain events lack causes, the existence of an undetermined God could be considered. However, this raises the issue that if God has no causes, His actions would be arbitrary and meaningless. They could occur one way or another without any apparent purpose, which leads to questions about the coherence and significance of divine actions.

The premise that the universe lacks a cause, understanding the universe as existence itself, raises the question of why a God would be necessary in relation to reality. If we assume that the universe has no cause, and cannot have one, the need for an ultimate cause, such as a God, is called into question. There is no requirement for an ultimate cause for existence, and there is no evidence to suggest that a completely natural explanation for the origin of the universe (our universe) cannot be found, without the need for divine intervention.

When applying the established criteria for God, the question of God's cause arises. Setting aside what occurs at the quantum level, the absence of a cause for God could be

considered simpler and therefore more probable, according to the principle of parsimony. This simplicity leads to questioning the necessity of positing the hypothesis of a causeless God versus other explanations, such as the idea of a causeless universe, thereby reducing complexity and avoiding unnecessary assumptions. To claim that God had no cause thus leads to the reasoning that we could instead consider a causeless universe, for example.

While a simpler explanation, based on inductive experience, might be deemed more probable, its simplicity does not guarantee its truth. In general, complexities seem to weigh against more intricate explanations. It is important to clarify that this statement does not necessarily advocate for simplicity. The correspondence between simpler explanations of facts and reality does not imply certainty; reality does not inherently favor simplicity, and what we perceive as simple or complex may depend on our cognition. Moreover, the explanations we construct are not obligated to align with this dichotomy.

On the other hand, it would be a mistake to argue that the universe was caused by God while ignoring the possibility that God does not require a cause. In this sense, one could assert that the universe did not need a cause, specifically referring to its existence and reality. However, regardless of this consideration, the existence or non-existence of God would not confer an ultimate meaning or purpose to things and life, as the question would arise whether something causes God, or if God's action is arbitrary in the absence of a cause. Ultimately, this would lack meaning at a deeper level.

It could be argued that, at our perceptual scale, the universe might have had a cause, while at a larger scale (reality as a whole), the notion of a cause might lack foundation. Likewise, one might refer to the idea of a cycle, where something possesses a cyclical nature and is contained within a context free of causes; a reality that encompasses a universe, our own, alternating between phases of Big Bang and destruction. In this context, the possibility of a causeless universe on a larger scale is mentioned, considering our universe as cyclical, especially if we contemplate the Big Bang-destruction sequence. However, it is plausible that our universe could continue expanding indefinitely, which is also a perspective worth considering (see reference 26 in the "References" section at the end of this work for additional information on this aspect).

But even on a grand scale (regarding existence itself), we might ask, “Why is there something rather than nothing?” Yet, we are faced with an unanswerable question. Why something and not nothing? That “something” simply exists because asking why it exists would imply that there is something beyond that something, which is impossible since we are at the very beginning of everything (structurally speaking). We cannot go further because, at this point, we would be outside of reality, leaving us without an explanation, and it is reality that we are trying to explain (see discussions from the first part).

Similarly, it is possible to argue that in the earliest moments, entropy in the universe reached its maximum value due to the scale of the universe, implying a state of absolute disorder. Under this premise, the possibility of a specific point of origin, such as that proposed in the hypothesis of a God who established the initial rules or forms to then create order, could be dismissed (see reference 28 in the "References" section at the end of this work).

However, it is important to note that I do not adopt a definitive stance regarding the existence of a God or intelligent entity that intervenes at a fundamental level. Even if such intervention is considered equivalent to natural phenomena, the previously discussed limitations make this perspective less plausible.

Nevertheless, one could argue that God, like us, could be part of a system with properties that transcend physical determinants. We cannot fully explain our functioning simply by understanding the particles and atoms that compose us. Although we are determined by causality, we possess the ability to create, design, and manipulate our environment—a capacity that could also be attributed to God. The central question lies in defining the ultimate reality of God. If we represent Him through fundamental elements, wouldn’t these be governed by quantum principles? Wouldn’t this be the scale where the absence of causes could be possible, that is, where true randomness exists?

However, I do not find this perspective valid given the arguments presented. The determination of a God who can operate at a fundamental level would not fully account for the behaviors of more complex systems with emergent properties. The impact of an entity composed of particles at a fundamental level would not be sufficient to determine the behaviors of higher structures. It is unclear how such an entity could significantly affect our world or have originated us or other organisms.

Despite this, without the causes that emanate from God, none of His actions would be possible. In this context, the causes of God would be the fundamental reason for His existence. If we consider that the initial foundations condition the formation of other systems, this influences what follows but does not explain everything. If God represents higher structures of matter on the scale of causality, we must recognize that the ultimate reasons would not be the entire structure of God, but rather how that structure was achieved. In this case, God would not be the fundamental cause of things. Otherwise, we would have to postulate that matter at the elemental level "determines itself." However, the mode of existence at the ultimate level would determine its behavior.

Randomness, as in the change of state at the quantum level, would be a component of reality in this scenario. Ontological chance itself would not necessarily imply self-determination by an intelligent entity composed of elementary particles. This type of randomness means that multiple possibilities can occur without a pre-established determination, challenging the notion of causality in a certain sense.

Contrary to the previous argument, one could argue that the intelligence of the entity emerges as a property of the whole, resulting from the interconnection between particles. It is argued that a single particle would be too simple to harbor intelligence. However, even if this were true, ultimately, the physical laws or the way matter behaves would be unchangeable and unique at the deepest level of existence. While there might be variations between universes or even within our own universe at specific time frames, altering the ultimate form of existence would be illogical and result in contradictions. These laws determine the behavior of matter.

The question is whether these laws can be considered intelligent or possess inherent purposes. They represent the form of existence. If we consider them merely as laws and equate them with God, then there would be no objections, but ultimately, they would not represent something intelligent, conscious, or purposeful. Moreover, the question arises again of whether labeling something as intelligent simply because it introduces "order" into the universe, life, and intelligent organisms is valid. But what is the basis for this definition?

It's possible that we project our perspective onto nature. When we design objects and observe the universe, we perceive an apparent order, which leads us to infer the existence of intelligence behind it as a cause. However, this appearance of design doesn't necessarily imply that there is actual design. A clear example is life and

organisms, which seem designed but are fully explained by natural selection. While it is undeniable that life had an origin, there is no imperative need to resort to the hypothesis of a creator; even considering God as part of nature, it doesn't necessarily require a conscious and intelligent nature, and probabilities aren't necessarily a problem.

We can draw an analogy with natural selection: this phenomenon arises from the way the world works. It isn't a specific process, but an event resulting from the fact that certain mutations, for example, are more adaptive in certain contexts. Similarly, the laws of nature could emerge from the way phenomena manifest. Whenever certain circumstances arise, a specific phenomenon occurs, and from there, we establish a law. When we question the origin of the laws of physics, we might conceive that they naturally emerge from the way phenomena unfold from our perspective; it is the way these phenomena manifest that we categorize as laws.

The question of why phenomena manifest in a certain way and not another is inherent. The answer might be that they simply do, and furthermore, it's possible that in other scenarios they manifest differently, giving rise to other laws. The specific configuration of the laws in our universe doesn't necessarily imply the existence of an intelligence behind them. Even if we consider that intelligence is suggested by our universe's ability to support life, including intelligent life, we could conceive situations where different laws still allow for the existence of life forms (see reference 29 in the "References" section at the end of this work for more information on this aspect).

Regarding ultimate reality, the question of why it operates in a specific way has no answer, as there are no underlying causes. If we consider that certain laws govern before the manifestation of our universe (within a process of action), there is no intrinsic "why" to explain why they work the way they do and not differently.

In contrast to the concept of multiple universes, where physical laws change to allow a material God, by established criteria, to configure a universe with specific laws (a particular mode of operation), there arises a need to identify the medium through which this intention is initially formed. This medium, in adhering to one specific behavior rather than another, must be linked to a particular form of behavior where specific laws manifest. This leads to the question: from where do these laws originate? Could they come from another God? However, this other God would also require another to determine its own laws, leading us to an infinite regression of gods dependent on one another.

The fundamental premise is that laws must ultimately emerge naturally, based on the nature of existence. Even if an entity determined them, the intention to promote certain events would depend on a prior state of the entity that made it possible, which in turn would be determined, and therefore not free by established criteria. Moreover, the establishment of these laws would not be subject to God but to its determinants. Although quantum randomness might be referenced as granting freedom, we must consider that this would essentially amount to self-determinism, ultimately resulting in arbitrary events. In this sense, everything emerging from God would be random, lacking clear purpose or intent.

Even if it is argued that this randomness could explain and influence our existence at a fundamental level, it's important to note that there are limits to God's determination, as He cannot achieve higher levels of complexity. Beyond these levels, things would function independently of His will, according to the criteria previously established to define God.

If God's intention were based on ontological randomness, it would be arbitrary and lack intrinsic purpose. The primordial structure of existence, which has no cause in itself, determines the behavior of things and acts as the cause governing their configuration. However, I doubt the possibility of ontological randomness detached from a structural cause, since what is structural manifests in reality and thus would limit the possibilities of randomness to avoid contradictions in the observable universe.

The ultimate structural cause resides in the primordial form of existence, which had no beginning in the sense of lacking causes, as it represents the very essence of existence, of reality. A whimsical action aimed at originating the universe based on an intention would not depend directly on God but on other laws beyond Him. This implies that the foundation of the universe's existence is something intrinsic that simply is, contradicting the notion of a purpose granted by God to the universe and all things within it.

In other words, if God wishes to create the universe, He must first have the intention to do so. However, this raises the question: why does He have that intention? What is the cause of God's intention? It becomes clear that a mechanism is needed to generate or represent this intention—a form that cannot be determined by God, as He would first need this form to determine it, which leads to a contradiction.

Consequently, there must be something prior to God: the form of His intention or whatever makes this intention possible and manifests in a certain way. If the intention were uncaused, it would be arbitrary, and as a result, God could not have a specific purpose designed for the creation of the universe, as it could have been entirely different.

We cannot attribute God as the determining cause of the universe if His behavior involves ontological randomness. From this perspective, He would lack reasons, causes, and meaning for what He generates. If God is the essence of existence itself, He cannot be determined nor determine a specific universe; everything would be an inherent consequence of His own form, without reaching levels of intelligence, intention, or consciousness.

The other possibility suggests the existence of an immaterial God, not subject to principles of causality and capable of influencing the material realm. However, how probable is this when compared to the simpler and more coherent explanations offered by the natural laws governing the world of matter and energy? Moreover, even in this conceptualization, God would still be part of existence and, therefore, subject to certain forms or modes of action, which leads to the same inconsistencies mentioned earlier, invalidating the possibility that He is the cause of a particular universe and casting doubt on the existence of an ultimate purpose.

Ultimately, physical laws represent the way things happen, but they lack intelligence and do not exclusively explain the behavior of biological systems, for example. If God exists according to the criteria of intelligence and consciousness, He would not occupy the role traditionally assigned to Him.

In a final reflection, one might argue that we should maintain an agnostic stance on this issue. Although we can reason about the relevance of God's existence, the question of whether we can definitively prove His existence remains unanswered.

The implications of what has been discussed suggest that an entity like God can never ultimately confer meaning in any way. It becomes irrelevant in terms of providing a fundamental purpose to things, and it can never be attributed as the reason for the existence of meaning at a fundamental level. The very nature of reality, given its essence, lacks ultimate meaning or purpose, as this would pertain to what does not exist, that is, to what is not.

The ultimate question raises the possibility that we may never know whether God exists or what His nature might be. In this case, the agnostic position seems reasonable, as it acknowledges our lack of knowledge to make a definitive judgment. However, an important distinction arises when considering the equal treatment of various propositions or hypotheses.

The agnostic stance might seem to presuppose that all propositions should be considered equally, but this apparent equivalence may not be justified. For instance, the hypothesis of God's existence, lacking arguments supported by evidence or concrete facts, is based on associations made by individuals without grounding in observable reality. In contrast, the hypothesis of life existing elsewhere in the universe is supported by knowledge of the chemistry of matter, astronomical observations, and the existence of life on our own planet, making it worthy of consideration in terms of empirical weight.

The skeptical attitude, in my view, is justified by evidence. There may be doubts about the certainty of a fact when the available evidence is insufficient to establish a judgment about its truth. However, it would make no sense to doubt something when there is neither evidence nor a valid argument to support it, as is the case with the proposition of God's existence based on the criteria previously established.

Therefore, skepticism emerges as a reasonable stance towards propositions backed by evidence and arguments, with doubt directed towards the truth based on the available evidence. So far, I have argued that the reasons for the existence of an entity like God, according to the established criteria, lack solid foundations as they do not align with observable reality.

The agnostic position is often presented as an impartial attitude, claiming that we cannot know if God exists. However, a dilemma arises when considering that asserting we cannot know implies some knowledge about the nature of God. In this sense, the claim that God is unknowable, as found in many religions, presents a paradox, as making such a statement presupposes some knowledge about God's nature. This creates a logical circle that can be problematic.

Attachment to experience is essential for supporting claims. However, the question arises as to how long we can remain agnostic about the possibility of obtaining evidence

for the existence of God, according to the agnostic criterion. Is it plausible to stay in a state of indefinite uncertainty?

The example of pink unicorns orbiting Pluto illustrates the importance of evidence and logical coherence in forming beliefs. Given the lack of empirical evidence for pink unicorns in our solar system and the logical inconsistency with our understanding of biology and the geography of Pluto, the probability of such a claim is extremely low and can therefore be reasonably dismissed. This example emphasizes that our beliefs should be grounded in the available evidence and in logical coherence with our existing knowledge.

Consideration of probability relies on both our knowledge and ignorance regarding a phenomenon. If we could determine all the causal factors of an event, the concept of probability would lose its applicability, as its function lies in providing a degree of certainty about the sequence of past events or those inferred from specific knowledge. The occurrence of an event is a concrete fact.

Typically, we observe that simpler explanations, in terms of conceptual complexity, suggest that other similarly simple explanations may be adequate for describing the world. This approach is derived from observation, but it does not necessarily imply a logical certainty that such an explanation is the only valid one. The notion of parsimony is not confined to explanations of simple things but refers to the idea that an explanation should not include unnecessary elements that add complexity without contributing to understanding.

The relevance in this context does not lie in the existence or non-existence of a divine being but in the impossibility of the implications attributed to it, according to a given criterion, in the event of its existence. In attempting to prove the existence of unicorns, we could do so if we were able to observe one (from a simplistic perspective). However, the lack of visual evidence would neither disprove their existence nor confirm it. Consequently, we cannot demonstrate their non-existence, given the open-ended nature of the hypothesis, although we could assert that their existence is highly improbable.

We can imagine a screen that blocks our view of what's behind it, with the claim that a divine being exists behind this screen. If we've never had the chance to see what's

behind it, the likelihood of that claim being accurate is questionable. It could be anything, or even nothing.

The possibility of knowing something is influenced by the presence of a screen that obstructs direct perception. Why hold a position that asserts the impossibility of such knowledge if there's no certainty that it’s unattainable? While this perspective doesn’t exactly align with the agnostic stance, it can be considered under that framework. It’s more reasonable, the argument goes, not to assert certainty in the absence of evidence, leading to the conclusion that one does not believe in the existence of the unknown, which is not the same as asserting its nonexistence—akin to saying "I think it doesn’t exist" or "I think it exists."

Identify four fundamental reasons that lead people to believe in the existence of a god and follow a specific religion, noting that the interaction between these reasons can vary. Among them are custom and tradition, ways of coping with death and uncertainty, ignorance of certain facts or misinterpretations, and the search for moral answers about right and wrong. However, it emphasizes that none of these reasons address the fundamental question of truth, as there is no evidence to date that supports the existence of a god.

One could argue that those who value truth cannot profess faith. In my view, the practice of acts of faith is not necessarily harmful in various situations. Sometimes, we take an optimistic view of an event, expecting X to be the outcome, even when we lack evidence to support such an expectation. Alternatively, we might take the opposite stance, preparing for an adverse outcome or simply refraining from forming expectations. Choosing to view the scenario positively can serve as motivation to face challenges and improve our mood. Since the future of our lives is uncertain, we conceive positive expectations that drive us to action; in a sense, we adopt an attitude of faith.

In this context, I wouldn’t dismiss faith as inherently negative in all circumstances. However, it would be wise to wait for more conclusive examples before making such a claim. It’s worth noting that in the case of optimism, there isn’t really an act of faith in the sense of believing with certainty that something good will happen without evidence. Instead, we consider the possibility that something positive might happen, based on the evidence that it’s feasible. We acknowledge that something good is a plausible outcome, though its occurrence is uncertain and depends on specific circumstances.

This apparent paradox becomes clearer when we understand that by asserting that something good is possible, we're making a statement not only about the general possibility in the world we live in but also about the likelihood of it happening in our specific situation. This probability is based on our knowledge and ignorance of the variables involved. On the other hand, the anticipation of the positive reflects our interests, preferences, and desires, but it cannot be equated with faith according to the criterion we've previously established for defining faith.

Belief in the existence of a being that gives meaning and facilitates contact with a transcendent reality isn't experienced uniformly in all its dimensions. A significant portion of the justification for this belief may lie in fear. People seek refuge in beliefs and communities that share the same conception, driven by the fear that the world doesn't align with their individual expectations. However, fear is not the only determining factor. One could argue that the perception of this entity originates from intuition, a faculty that transcends what is observed and has validity comparable to what is empirically perceivable.

It is crucial to recognize that intuition does not arise independently of knowledge; otherwise, it would lack a foundation and wouldn't be connected to preceding events that trigger it. Intuition might surface in situations where, based on certain knowledge, we assert, for example, that the Earth is flat (under certain criteria, one might refer to this as "intuition" in a different context). However, the Earth is not flat, which highlights that the knowledge it's based on does not guarantee certainty. Moreover, the certainty derived from intuition could be a result of coincidence. Is this a fact, or is the belief in the flatness of the Earth an erroneous generalization or induction? The answer to this question depends on the definition and criteria we establish. It's suggested that inexplicable knowledge is that which we are unable to elucidate the underlying associations for. However, this does not imply that it escapes mental reality or operates independently of conceptual associations; rather, it reflects the limitations of our consciousness in identifying those associations.

Therefore, all intuition may be traced back to conceptual associations rooted in reality, understood as links generated by the mental associative process, though these associations do not necessarily reflect phenomena occurring in the external world. One must avoid confusion by arguing that the mental is ultimately related to perceptible reality.

Both the intellectual and the intuitive can be illusory or truthful, but the truthfulness of intuition, by itself, is not a guarantee of certainty, and we should not assume that either the intellectual or the intuitive are immediate sources of truth. Grasping the truth often requires time and analysis, and both the intellectual and intuitive dimensions should be cautiously evaluated for their intrinsic ability to provide certainty.

Intellectual apprehension of truth materializes when it accurately reflects the relationships and aspects that genuinely exist in reality. At times, reality presents counterintuitive facets, where what seems evident does not correspond to the actual situation.

A proposition on a specific topic cannot be considered true unless it reflects reality or constitutes a logical postulate within its terms. To more accurately assess whether a proposition reflects reality, evidence and logic are employed, as these two dimensions intertwine with reality itself.

It is essential to recognize that, although a proposition is part of reality in the sense that it exists in our mind, it does not necessarily refer to elements that physically exist in the observable world. These elements may be either observable or unobservable.

In relation to the belief in the existence of God, this context does not advocate for its rejection. The possibility of God's existence has not been denied here. However, we have explored the various possibilities and the nature that could be attributed to God, without ruling out His existence.

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